

**STATE PLAN FOR THE
NORTH CAROLINA STATE VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM
AND
STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE NORTH
CAROLINA STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT
SERVICES PROGRAM**



**Updated for FFY 2014
Effective 10/1/2013 – 9/30/2014**

**State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and
State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program**

NC Dept of Health and Human Services - Division of Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan for Fiscal Year 2014 (submitted FY 2013)

Preprint - Section 1: State Certifications

- 1.1 The **North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services** is authorized to submit this State Plan under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended [1] and its supplement under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act [2].
- 1.2 As a condition for the receipt of federal funds under Title I, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, the **North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services** [3] agrees to operate and administer the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with the provisions of this State Plan [4], the Rehabilitation Act, and all applicable regulations [5], policies and procedures established by the secretary. Funds made available under Section 111 of the Rehabilitation Act are used solely for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and the administration of the State Plan for the vocational rehabilitation services program.
- 1.3 As a condition for the receipt of federal funds under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act for supported employment services, the designated state agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the provisions of the supplement to this State Plan [6], the Rehabilitation Act and all applicable regulations [7], policies and procedures established by the secretary. Funds made available under Title VI, Part B, are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the Title I State Plan.
Yes
- 1.4 The designated state agency and/or the designated state unit has the authority under state law to perform the functions of the state regarding this State Plan and its supplement.
Yes
- 1.5 The state legally may carry out each provision of the State Plan and its supplement.
Yes
- 1.6 All provisions of the State Plan and its supplement are consistent with state law.
Yes
- 1.7 The (enter title of state officer below)
Yes
Director Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
... has the authority under state law to receive, hold and disburse federal funds made available under this State Plan and its supplement.
- 1.8 The (enter title of state officer below)...
Yes
Secretary Department of Health and Human Services
... has the authority to submit this State Plan for vocational rehabilitation services and the State Plan supplement for supported employment services.
- 1.9 The agency that submits this State Plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.
Yes

State Plan Certified By

As the authorized signatory identified above, I hereby certify that I will sign, date and retain in the files of the designated state agency/designated state unit Section 1 of the Preprint, and separate Certification of Lobbying forms (Form ED-80-0013; available at <http://www.ed.gov/fund/grant/apply/appforms/ed80-013.pdf>) for both the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.

Signed:

Name of Signatory: Aldona Z. Wos, M.D.

Title of Signatory: Secretary

Date Signed: July 1, 2013

Assurances Certified By

At the request of RSA, the designated state agency and/or the designated state unit provide the following assurance(s), in addition to those contained within Section 2 through 8 below, in connection with the approval of the State Plan for FY 2014

Yes

Comments:

- Certification Regarding Lobbying (ED 80-0013) for the NC DVRS Vocational Rehabilitation Program
- Certification Regarding Lobbying (ED 80-0013) for the NC DVRS Supported Employment Program

Signed:

Name of Signatory: Aldona Z. Wos, M.D.

Title of Signatory: Secretary

Date Signed: July 1, 2013

* The signatory of the assurance with the authority to execute and submit the State Plan will maintain a signed copy of the assurance(s) with the signed State Plan.

Section 1 Footnotes

- [1] Public Law 93 112, as amended by Public Laws 93 516, 95 602, 98 221, 99 506, 100-630, 102-569, 103-073, and 105-220.
- [2] Unless otherwise stated, "Rehabilitation Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.
- [3] All references in this plan to "designated state agency" or to "the state agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.
- [4] No funds under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved State Plan in accordance with Section 101(a) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR part 361.
- [5] Applicable regulations include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR Parts 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85 and 86 and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program regulations in 34 CFR Part 361.
- [6] No funds under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the Title I State Plan in accordance with Section 625(a) of the Rehabilitation Act.
- [7] Applicable regulations include the EDGAR citations in footnote 5, 34 CFR Part 361, and 34 CFR Part 363.

Preprint - Section 2: Public Comment on State Plan Policies and Procedures

2.1 Public participation requirements. (Section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.10(d), .20(a), (b), (d); and 363.11(g)(9))

(a) Conduct of public meetings.

The designated state agency, prior to the adoption of any substantive policies or procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State Plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State Plan, including making any substantive amendments to the policies and procedures, conducts public meetings throughout the state to provide the public, including individuals with disabilities, an opportunity to comment on the policies or procedures.

(b) Notice requirements.

The designated state agency, prior to conducting the public meetings, provides appropriate and sufficient notice throughout the state of the meetings in accordance with state law governing public meetings or, in the absence of state law governing public meetings, procedures developed by the state agency in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a council.

(c) Special consultation requirements.

The state agency actively consults with the director of the Client Assistance Program, the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a council and, as appropriate, Indian tribes, tribal organizations and native Hawaiian organizations on its policies and procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State Plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State Plan.

Preprint - Section 3: Submission of the State Plan and its Supplement

3.1 Submission and revisions of the State Plan and its supplement. (Sections 101(a)(1), (23) and 625(a)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act; Section 501 of the Workforce Investment Act; 34 CFR 76.140; 361.10(e), (f), and (g); and 363.10)

- (a) The state submits to the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration the State Plan and its supplement on the same date that the state submits either a State Plan under Section 112 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 or a state unified plan under Section 501 of that Rehabilitation Act.
- (b) The state submits only those policies, procedures or descriptions required under this State Plan and its supplement that have not been previously submitted to and approved by the commissioner.
- (c) The state submits to the commissioner, at such time and in such manner as the commissioner determines to be appropriate, reports containing annual updates of the information relating to the:
 - 1. comprehensive system of personnel development;
 - 2. assessments, estimates, goals and priorities, and reports of progress;
 - 3. innovation and expansion activities; and
 - 4. other updates of information required under Title I, Part B, or Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act that are requested by the commissioner.
- (d) The State Plan and its supplement are in effect subject to the submission of modifications the state determines to be necessary or the commissioner requires based on a change in state policy, a change in federal law, including regulations, an interpretation of the Rehabilitation Act by a federal court or the highest court of the state, or a finding by the commissioner of state noncompliance with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361 or 34 CFR 363.

3.2 Supported Employment State Plan supplement. (Sections 101(a)(22) and 625(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.34 and 363.10)

- (a) The state has an acceptable plan for carrying out Part B, of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act that provides for the use of funds under that part to supplement funds made available under Part B, of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the cost of services leading to supported employment.
- (b) The Supported Employment State Plan, including any needed annual revisions, is submitted as a supplement to the State Plan.

Preprint - Section 4: Administration of the State Plan

4.1 Designated state agency and designated state unit. (Section 101(a)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.13(a) and (b))

(a) Designated state agency.

1. There is a state agency designated as the sole state agency to administer the State Plan or to supervise its administration in a political subdivision of the state by a sole local agency.
2. The designated state agency is a state agency that is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and includes a vocational rehabilitation unit as provided in paragraph (b) of this section. (Option A was not selected/Option B was selected)
3. In American Samoa, the designated state agency is the governor.

(b) Designated state unit.

1. If the designated state agency is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities, in accordance with subparagraph 4.1(a)(2)(B) of this section, the state agency includes a vocational rehabilitation bureau, division or unit that:
 - A. is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation or vocational and other rehabilitation of individuals with disabilities and is responsible for the administration of the designated state agency's vocational rehabilitation program under the State Plan;
 - B. has a full-time director;
 - C. has a staff, at least 90 percent of whom are employed full-time on the rehabilitation work of the organizational unit; and
 - D. is located at an organizational level and has an organizational status within the designated state agency comparable to that of other major organizational units of the designated state agency.
2. The name of the designated state vocational rehabilitation unit is

NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

4.2 State independent commission or State Rehabilitation Council. (Sections 101(a)(21) and 105 of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.16 and .17)

The State Plan must contain one of the following assurances.

(a) The designated state agency is an independent state commission. (Option A was not selected/Option B was selected)

(b) The state has established a State Rehabilitation Council that meets the criteria set forth in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.17 and the designated state unit.

1. jointly with the State Rehabilitation Council develops, agrees to and reviews annually state goals and priorities and jointly submits to the commissioner annual reports of progress in accordance with the provisions of Section 101(a)(15) of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.29 and subsection 4.11 of this State Plan;

2. regularly consults with the State Rehabilitation Council regarding the development, implementation and revision of state policies and procedures of general applicability pertaining to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services;
 3. includes in the State Plan and in any revision to the State Plan a summary of input provided by the State Rehabilitation Council, including recommendations from the annual report of the council described in Section 105(c)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(5), the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction described in Section 105(c)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(h)(4), and other reports prepared by the council and the response of the designated state unit to the input and recommendations, including explanations for rejecting any input or recommendation; and
 4. transmits to the council:
 - A. all plans, reports and other information required under 34 CFR 361 to be submitted to the commissioner;
 - B. all policies and information on all practices and procedures of general applicability provided to or used by rehabilitation personnel in carrying out this State Plan and its supplement; and
 - C. copies of due process hearing decisions issued under 34 CFR 361.57, which are transmitted in such a manner as to ensure that the identity of the participants in the hearings is kept confidential.
- (c) If the designated state unit has a State Rehabilitation Council, Attachment 4.2(c) provides a summary of the input provided by the council consistent with the provisions identified in subparagraph (b)(3) of this section; the response of the designated state unit to the input and recommendations; and, explanations for the rejection of any input or any recommendation.

4.3 Consultations regarding the administration of the State Plan. (Section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.21)

The designated state agency takes into account, in connection with matters of general policy arising in the administration of the plan and its supplement, the views of:

- (a) individuals and groups of individuals who are recipients of vocational rehabilitation services or, as appropriate, the individuals' representatives;
- (b) personnel working in programs that provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- (c) providers of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- (d) the director of the Client Assistance Program; and
- (e) the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a council.

4.4 Nonfederal share. (Sections 7(14) and 101(a)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 80.24 and 361.60)

The nonfederal share of the cost of carrying out this State Plan is 21.3 percent and is provided through the financial participation by the state or, if the state elects, by the state and local agencies.

4.5 Local administration. (Sections 7(24) and 101(a)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.5(b)(47) and .15)

The State Plan provides for the administration of the plan by a local agency. No

If "Yes", the designated state agency:

- (a) ensures that each local agency is under the supervision of the designated state unit with the sole local agency, as that term is defined in Section 7(24) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.5(b)(47), responsible for the administration of the vocational rehabilitation program within the political subdivision that it serves; and
- (b) develops methods that each local agency will use to administer the vocational rehabilitation program in accordance with the State Plan.

4.6 Shared funding and administration of joint programs. (Section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.27)

The State Plan provides for the state agency to share funding and administrative responsibility with another state agency or local public agency to carry out a joint program to provide services to individuals with disabilities. No

If "Yes", the designated state agency submits to the commissioner for approval a plan that describes its shared funding and administrative arrangement. The plan must include:

- (a) a description of the nature and scope of the joint program;
- (b) the services to be provided under the joint program;
- (c) the respective roles of each participating agency in the administration and provision of services; and
- (d) the share of the costs to be assumed by each agency.

4.7 Statewide and waivers of statewide. (Section 101(a)(4) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.25, .26, and .60(b)(3)(i) and (ii))

X This agency is not requesting a waiver of statewide.

- (a) Services provided under the State Plan are available in all political subdivisions of the state.
- (b) The state unit may provide services in one or more political subdivisions of the state that increase services or expand the scope of services that are available statewide under this State Plan if the:

- 1. nonfederal share of the cost of these services is met from funds provided by a local public agency, including funds contributed to a local public agency by a private agency, organization or individual;
- 2. services are likely to promote the vocational rehabilitation of substantially larger numbers of individuals with disabilities or of individuals with disabilities with particular types of impairments; and
- 3. state, for purposes other than the establishment of a community rehabilitation program or the construction of a particular facility for community rehabilitation program purposes, requests in Attachment 4.7(b)(3) a waiver of the statewide requirement in accordance with the following requirements:
 - A. identification of the types of services to be provided;
 - B. written assurance from the local public agency that it will make available to the state unit the nonfederal share of funds;
 - C. written assurance that state unit approval will be obtained for each proposed service before it is put into effect; and
 - D. written assurance that all other State Plan requirements, including a state's order of selection, will apply to all services approved under the waiver.

- (c) Contributions, consistent with the requirements of 34 CFR 361.60(b)(3)(ii), by private entities of earmarked funds for particular geographic areas within the state may be used as part of the nonfederal share without the state requesting a waiver of the statewide requirement provided that the state notifies the commissioner that it cannot provide the full nonfederal share without using the earmarked funds.

4.8 Cooperation, collaboration and coordination. (Sections 101(a)(11), (24)(B), and 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.22, .23, .24, and .31, and 363.11(e))

- (a) Cooperative agreements with other components of statewide work force investment system.

The designated state agency or the designated state unit has cooperative agreements with other entities that are components of the statewide work force investment system and replicates those agreements at the local level between individual offices of the designated state unit and local entities carrying out the One-Stop service delivery system or other activities through the statewide work force investment system.

- (b) Cooperation and coordination with other agencies and entities.

Attachment 4.8(b) (1)-(4) describes the designated state agency's:

1. cooperation with and use of the services and facilities of the federal, state, and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the undersecretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture and state use contracting programs, to the extent that those agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide work force investment system;
2. coordination, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 4.8(c) of this section, with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services;
3. establishment of cooperative agreements with private nonprofit vocational rehabilitation service providers, in accordance with the requirements of paragraph 5.10(b) of the State Plan; and,
4. efforts to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and entities with respect to the provision of supported employment and extended services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, in accordance with the requirements of subsection 6.5 of the supplement to this State Plan.

(c) Coordination with education officials.

1. Attachment 4.8(b)(2) describes the plans, policies and procedures for coordination between the designated state agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students who are individuals with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under the responsibility of the designated state agency.
2. The State Plan description must:
 - A. provide for the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with 34 CFR 361.45 as early as possible during the transition planning process but, at the latest, before each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting or if the designated state unit is operating on an order of selection before each eligible student able to be served under the order leaves the school setting; and
 - B. include information on a formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency that, at a minimum, provides for:
 - i. consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
 - ii. transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and the educational agency for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs under Section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
 - iii. roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and

- iv. procedures for outreach to students with disabilities as early as possible during the transition planning process and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

(d) Coordination with statewide independent living council and independent living centers.

The designated state unit, the Statewide Independent Living Council established under Section 705 of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 364, and the independent living centers described in Part C of Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 366 have developed working relationships and coordinate their activities.

(e) Cooperative agreement with recipients of grants for services to American Indians.

1. There is in the state a recipient(s) of a grant under Part C of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing on or near federal and state reservations. **Yes**

2. If "Yes", the designated state agency has entered into a formal cooperative agreement that meets the following requirements with each grant recipient in the state that receives funds under Part C of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act:

A. strategies for interagency referral and information sharing that will assist in eligibility determinations and the development of individualized plans for employment;

B. procedures for ensuring that American Indians who are individuals with disabilities and are living near a reservation or tribal service area are provided vocational rehabilitation services; and

C. provisions for sharing resources in cooperative studies and assessments, joint training activities, and other collaborative activities designed to improve the provision of services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities.

4.9 Methods of administration. (Section 101(a)(6) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.12, .19 and .51(a) and (b))

(a) In general.

The state agency employs methods of administration, including procedures to ensure accurate data collection and financial accountability, found by the commissioner to be necessary for the proper and efficient administration of the plan and for carrying out all the functions for which the state is responsible under the plan and 34 CFR 361.

(b) Employment of individuals with disabilities.

The designated state agency and entities carrying out community rehabilitation programs in the state, who are in receipt of assistance under Part B, of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and this State Plan, take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities covered under and on the same terms and conditions as set forth in Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act.

(c) Facilities.

Any facility used in connection with the delivery of services assisted under this State Plan meets program accessibility requirements consistent with the provisions, as applicable, of the Architectural Barriers Rehabilitation Act of 1968, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the regulations implementing these laws.

4.10 Comprehensive system of personnel development. (Section 101(a)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.18)

Attachment 4.10 describes the designated state agency's procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of

qualified state rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated state unit. The description includes the following:

(a) Data system on personnel and personnel development.

Development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs and personnel development with respect to:

1. Qualified personnel needs.
 - A. The number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;
 - B. The number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and
 - C. Projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services in the state in five years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.
2. Personnel development.
 - A. A list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
 - B. The number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
 - C. The number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

(b) Plan for recruitment, preparation and retention of qualified personnel.

Development, updating on an annual basis, and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel based on the data collection and analysis system described in paragraph (a) of this subsection and that provides for the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare and retain personnel who are qualified in accordance with paragraph (c) of this subsection, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

(c) Personnel standards.

Policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained, including:

1. standards that are consistent with any national- or state-approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or, in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements (including state personnel requirements) that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services.

2. To the extent that existing standards are not based on the highest requirements in the state applicable to a particular profession or discipline, the steps the state is currently taking and the steps the state plans to take in accordance with the written plan to retrain or hire personnel within the designated state unit to meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in the state, including measures to notify designated state unit personnel, the institutions of higher education identified in subparagraph (a)(2), and other public agencies of these steps and the time lines for taking each step.
3. The written plan required by subparagraph (c)(2) describes the following:
 - A. specific strategies for retraining, recruiting and hiring personnel;
 - B. the specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the standards required by subparagraph (c)(1);
 - C. procedures for evaluating the designated state unit's progress in hiring or retraining personnel to meet applicable personnel standards within the established time period; and
 - D. the identification of initial minimum qualifications that the designated state unit will require of newly hired personnel when the state unit is unable to hire new personnel who meet the established personnel standards and the identification of a plan for training such individuals to meet the applicable standards within the time period established for all state unit personnel to meet the established personnel standards.

(d) Staff development.

Policies, procedures and activities to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training. The narrative describes the following:

1. A system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated state unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement and rehabilitation technology.
2. Procedures for the acquisition and dissemination to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessional's significant knowledge from research and other sources.

(e) Personnel to address individual communication needs.

Availability of personnel within the designated state unit or obtaining the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals.

(f) Coordination of personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

4.11. Statewide assessment; annual estimates; annual state goals and priorities; strategies; and progress reports.

(Sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2) and 625(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.17(h)(2), .29, and 363.11(b))

(a) Comprehensive statewide assessment.

1. Attachment 4.11(a) documents the results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly conducted every three years by the designated state unit and the State Rehabilitation Council (if the state has such a council). The assessment describes:

A. the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:

i. individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

ii. individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program carried out under this State Plan; and

iii. individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide work force investment system.

B. The need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.

2. For any year in which the state updates the assessments, the designated state unit submits to the commissioner a report containing information regarding updates to the assessments.

(b) Annual estimates.

Attachment 4.11(b) identifies on an annual basis state estimates of the:

1. number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services under the plan;

2. number of eligible individuals who will receive services provided with funds provided under Part B of Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and under Part B of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act, including, if the designated state agency uses an order of selection in accordance with subparagraph 5.3(b)(2) of this State Plan, estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order; and

3. costs of the services described in subparagraph (b)(1), including, if the designated state agency uses an order of selection, the service costs for each priority category within the order.

(c) Goals and priorities.

1. Attachment 4.11(c)(1) identifies the goals and priorities of the state that are jointly developed or revised, as applicable, with and agreed to by the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a council, in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.

2. The designated state agency submits to the commissioner a report containing information regarding any revisions in the goals and priorities for any year the state revises the goals and priorities.

3. Order of selection.

If the state agency implements an order of selection, consistent with subparagraph 5.3(b)(2) of the State Plan, Attachment 4.11(c)(3):

- A. shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services;
 - B. provides a justification for the order; and
 - C. identifies the service and outcome goals, and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
4. Goals and plans for distribution of Title VI, Part B, funds.
Attachment 4.11(c)(4) specifies, consistent with subsection 6.4 of the State Plan supplement, the state's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under Section 622 of the Rehabilitation Act for the provision of supported employment services.

(d) Strategies.

- 1. Attachment 4.11(d) describes the strategies, including:
 - A. the methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities, including how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to those individuals at each stage of the rehabilitation process and how those services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis;
 - B. outreach procedures to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities in accordance with subsection 6.6 of the State Plan supplement, and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program;
 - C. as applicable, the plan of the state for establishing, developing or improving community rehabilitation programs;
 - D. strategies to improve the performance of the state with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators established pursuant to Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act; and
 - E. strategies for assisting other components of the statewide work force investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.
- 2. Attachment 4.11 (d) describes how the designated state agency uses these strategies to:
 - A. address the needs identified in the assessment conducted under paragraph 4.11(a) and achieve the goals and priorities identified in the State Plan attachments under paragraph 4.11(c);
 - B. support the innovation and expansion activities identified in subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) and (2) of the plan; and
 - C. overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Supported Employment Services Program.

(e) Evaluation and reports of progress.

1. The designated state unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state unit has a council, jointly submits to the commissioner an annual report on the results of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program and the progress made in improving the effectiveness of the program from the previous year.
2. Attachment 4.11(e)(2):
 - A. provides an evaluation of the extent to which the goals identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1) and, if applicable, Attachment 4.11(c)(3) were achieved;
 - B. identifies the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals and priorities;
 - C. describes the factors that impeded their achievement, to the extent they were not achieved;
 - D. assesses the performance of the state on the standards and indicators established pursuant to Section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act; and
 - E. provides a report consistent with paragraph 4.12(c) of the plan on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities were utilized in the preceding year.

4.12 Innovation and expansion. (Section 101(a)(18) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.35)

- (a) The designated state agency reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the state under Section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for the:
 1. development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State Plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment identified in Attachment 4.11(a) and goals and priorities of the state identified in Attachments 4.11(c)(1) and, if applicable, Attachment 4.11(c)(3); and
 2. support of the funding for the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has such a council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under Section 105(d)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.17(i), and the funding of the Statewide Independent Living Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under Section 705(e)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 364.21(i).

- (b) Attachment 4.11 (d) describes how the reserved funds identified in subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) and (2) will be utilized.
- (c) Attachment 4.11(e)(2) describes how the reserved funds were utilized in the preceding year.

4.13 Reports. (Section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.40)

- (a) The designated state unit submits reports in the form and level of detail and at the time required by the commissioner regarding applicants for and eligible individuals receiving services under the State Plan.
- (b) Information submitted in the reports provides a complete count, unless sampling techniques are used, of the applicants and eligible individuals in a manner that permits the greatest possible cross-classification of data and protects the confidentiality of the identity of each individual.

Preprint - Section 5: Administration of the Provision of Vocational Rehabilitation Services

5.1 Information and referral services. (Sections 101(a)(5)(D) and (20) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.37)

The designated state agency has implemented an information and referral system that is adequate to ensure that individuals with disabilities, including individuals who do not meet the agency's order of selection criteria for receiving vocational rehabilitation services if the agency is operating on an order of selection, are provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, including counseling and referral for job placement, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist such individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining or regaining employment, and are referred to other appropriate federal and state programs, including other components of the statewide work force investment system in the state.

5.2 Residency. (Section 101(a)(12) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.42(c)(1))

The designated state unit imposes no duration of residence requirement as part of determining an individual's eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services or that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the state.

5.3 Ability to serve all eligible individuals; order of selection for services. (Sections 12(d) and 101(a)(5) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.36)

- (a) The designated state unit is able to provide the full range of services listed in Section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.48, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the state who apply for services. Yes
- (b) If No:
 - 1. Individuals with the most significant disabilities, in accordance with criteria established by the state, are selected first for vocational rehabilitation services before other individuals with disabilities.
 - 2. Attachment 4.11(c)(3):
 - A. shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services;
 - B. provides a justification for the order of selection; and
 - C. identifies the state's service and outcome goals and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
 - 3. Eligible individuals who do not meet the order of selection criteria have access to the services provided through the designated state unit's information and referral system established under Section 101(a)(20) of the Rehabilitation Act, 34 CFR 361.37, and subsection 5.1 of this State Plan.

5.4 Availability of comparable services and benefits. (Sections 101(a)(8) and 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.53)

- (a) Prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation services, except those services identified in paragraph (b), to an eligible individual or to members of the individual's family, the state unit determines whether comparable services and benefits exist under any other program and whether those services and benefits are available to the individual.
- (b) The following services are exempt from a determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits:
 - 1. assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;

2. counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of Section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act;
 3. referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies, including other components of the statewide work force investment system, through agreements developed under Section 101(a)(11) of the Rehabilitation Act, if such services are not available under this State Plan;
 4. job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;
 5. rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory and other technological aids and devices; and
 6. post-employment services consisting of the services listed under subparagraphs (1) through (5) of this paragraph.
- (c) The requirements of paragraph (a) of this section do not apply if the determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits under any other program would interrupt or delay:
1. progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;
 2. an immediate job placement; or
 3. provision of vocational rehabilitation services to any individual who is determined to be at extreme medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate qualified medical professional.

- (d) The governor in consultation with the designated state vocational rehabilitation agency and other appropriate agencies ensures that an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination that meets the requirements of Section 101(a)(8)(B)(i)-(iv) of the Rehabilitation Act takes effect between the designated state unit and any appropriate public entity, including the state Medicaid program, a public institution of higher education, and a component of the statewide work force investment system to ensure the provision of the vocational rehabilitation services identified in Section 103(a) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.48, other than the services identified in paragraph (b) of this section, that are included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual, including the provision of those vocational rehabilitation services during the pendency of any dispute that may arise in the implementation of the interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination.

5.5 Individualized plan for employment. (Section 101(a)(9) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.45 and .46)

- (a) An individualized plan for employment meeting the requirements of Section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.45 and .46 is developed and implemented in a timely manner for each individual determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, except if the state has implemented an order of selection, and is developed and implemented for each individual to whom the designated state unit is able to provide vocational rehabilitation services.
- (b) Services to an eligible individual are provided in accordance with the provisions of the individualized plan for employment.

5.6 Opportunity to make informed choices regarding the selection of services and providers. (Sections 101(a)(19) and 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.52)

Applicants and eligible individuals or, as appropriate, their representatives are provided information and support services to assist in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process, consistent with the provisions of Section 102(d) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.52.

5.7 Services to American Indians. (Section 101(a)(13) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.30)

The designated state unit provides vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the state to the same extent as the designated state agency provides such services to other significant populations of individuals with disabilities residing in the state.

5.8 Annual review of individuals in extended employment or other employment under special certificate provisions of the fair labor standards act of 1938. (Section 101(a)(14) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.55)

- (a) The designated state unit conducts an annual review and reevaluation of the status of each individual with a disability served under this State Plan:
 - 1. who has achieved an employment outcome in which the individual is compensated in accordance with Section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. 214(c)); or
 - 2. whose record of services is closed while the individual is in extended employment on the basis that the individual is unable to achieve an employment outcome in an integrated setting or that the individual made an informed choice to remain in extended employment.
- (b) The designated state unit carries out the annual review and reevaluation for two years after the individual's record of services is closed (and thereafter if requested by the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative) to determine the interests, priorities and needs of the individual with respect to competitive employment or training for competitive employment.
- (c) The designated state unit makes maximum efforts, including the identification and provision of vocational rehabilitation services, reasonable accommodations and other necessary support services, to assist the individuals described in paragraph (a) in engaging in competitive employment.
- (d) The individual with a disability or, if appropriate, the individual's representative has input into the review and reevaluation and, through signed acknowledgement, attests that the review and reevaluation have been conducted.

5.9 Use of Title I funds for construction of facilities. (Sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b)(2)(A) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.49(a)(1), .61 and .62(b))

If the state elects to construct, under special circumstances, facilities for community rehabilitation programs, the following requirements are met:

- (a) The federal share of the cost of construction for facilities for a fiscal year does not exceed an amount equal to 10 percent of the state's allotment under Section 110 of the Rehabilitation Act for that fiscal year.
- (b) The provisions of Section 306 of the Rehabilitation Act that were in effect prior to the enactment of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 apply to such construction.
- (c) There is compliance with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.62(b) that ensure the use of the construction authority will not reduce the efforts of the designated state agency in providing other vocational rehabilitation services other than the establishment of facilities for community rehabilitation programs.

5.10 Contracts and cooperative agreements. (Section 101(a)(24) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.31 and .32)

- (a) Contracts with for-profit organizations.

The designated state agency has the authority to enter into contracts with for-profit organizations for the purpose of providing, as vocational rehabilitation services, on-the-job training and related programs for individuals with disabilities under Part A of Title VI of the Rehabilitation Act, upon the determination by the designated state agency that for-profit organizations are better qualified to provide vocational rehabilitation services than nonprofit agencies and organizations.
- (b) Cooperative agreements with private nonprofit organizations.

Attachment 4.8(b)(3) describes the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private nonprofit vocational rehabilitation service providers.

Preprint - Section 6: Program Administration

Section 6: Program Administration

6.1 Designated state agency. (Section 625(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(a))

The designated state agency for vocational rehabilitation services identified in paragraph 1.2 of the Title I State Plan is the state agency designated to administer the State Supported Employment Services Program authorized under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act.

6.2 Statewide assessment of supported employment services needs. (Section 625(b)(2) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))

Attachment 4.11(a) describes the results of the comprehensive, statewide needs assessment conducted under Section 101(a)(15)(a)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and subparagraph 4.11(a)(1) of the Title I State Plan with respect to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with most significant disabilities and their need for supported employment services, including needs related to coordination.

6.3 Quality, scope and extent of supported employment services. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(c) and .50(b)(2))

Attachment 6.3 describes the quality, scope and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive supported employment services. The description also addresses the timing of the transition to extended services to be provided by relevant state agencies, private nonprofit organizations or other sources following the cessation of supported employment service provided by the designated state agency.

6.4 Goals and plans for distribution of Title VI, Part B, funds. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(d) and .20)

Attachment 4.11(c)(4) identifies the state's goals and plans with respect to the distribution of funds received under Section 622 of the Rehabilitation Act.

6.5 Evidence of collaboration with respect to supported employment services and extended services. (Sections 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(e))

Attachment 4.8(b)(4) describes the efforts of the designated state agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and other appropriate entities to assist in the provision of supported employment services and other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations within the state, employers, natural supports, and other entities with respect to the provision of extended services.

6.6 Minority outreach. (34 CFR 363.11(f))

Attachment 4.11(d) includes a description of the designated state agency's outreach procedures for identifying and serving individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities.

6.7 Reports. (Sections 625(b)(8) and 626 of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(h) and .52)

The designated state agency submits reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the commissioner may require and collects the information required by Section 101(a)(10) of the Rehabilitation Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under Part B, of Title VI and individuals receiving supported employment services under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act.

Preprint - Section 7: Financial Administration

7.1 Five percent limitation on administrative costs. (Section 625(b)(7) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(8))

The designated state agency expends no more than five percent of the state's allotment under Section 622 of the Rehabilitation Act for administrative costs in carrying out the State Supported Employment Services Program.

7.2 Use of funds in providing services. (Sections 623 and 625(b)(6)(A) and (D) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 363.6(c)(2)(iv), .11(g)(1) and (4))

- (a) Funds made available under Title VI, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act are used by the designated state agency only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive such services.
- (b) Funds provided under Title VI, Part B, are used only to supplement and not supplant the funds provided under Title I, Part B, of the Rehabilitation Act, in providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment.
- (c) Funds provided under Part B of Title VI or Title I of the Rehabilitation Act are not used to provide extended services to individuals who are eligible under Part B of Title VI or Title I of the Rehabilitation Act.

Preprint - Section 8: Provision of Supported Employment Services

8.1 Scope of supported employment services. (Sections 7(36) and 625(b)(6)(F) and (G) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.5(b)(54), 363.11(g)(6) and (7))

- (a) Supported employment services are those services as defined in Section 7(36) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.5(b)(54).
- (b) To the extent job skills training is provided, the training is provided on-site.
- (c) Supported employment services include placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

8.2 Comprehensive assessments of individuals with significant disabilities. (Sections 7(2)(B) and 625(b)(6)(B); 34 CFR 361.5(b)(6)(ii) and 363.11(g)(2))

The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities conducted under Section 102(b)(1) of the Rehabilitation Act and funded under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome.

8.3 Individualized plan for employment. (Sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 625(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Rehabilitation Act; 34 CFR 361.46(b) and 363.11(g)(3) and (5))

- (a) An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of Section 102(b) of the Rehabilitation Act and 34 CFR 361.45 and .46 is developed and updated using funds under Title I.
- (b) The individualized plan for employment:
 - 1. specifies the supported employment services to be provided;
 - 2. describes the expected extended services needed; and
 - 3. identifies the source of extended services, including natural supports, or, to the extent that it is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the individualized plan for employment plan is developed, a statement describing the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that sources will become available.
- (c) Services provided under an individualized plan for employment are coordinated with services provided under other individualized plans established under other federal or state programs.

Attachment 4.2(c) Input of State Rehabilitation Council

Required annually by all agencies except those agencies that are independent consumer-controlled commissions.

Identify the Input provided by the state rehabilitation council, including recommendations from the council's annual report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other council reports. Be sure to also include:

- the Designated state unit's response to the input and recommendations; and
- explanations for the designated state unit's rejection of any input or recommendation of the council.

Input and Recommendations from the North Carolina State Rehabilitation Council (NC SRC)

During FFY 2012, members of the State Rehabilitation Council provided input through various venues as follows:

- The Council's Executive Committee addresses State Plan development, implementation, and progress towards both Plan goals and SRC goals within the Goals, Priorities and Strategies section of the State Plan during monthly meetings with the Division's director and staff. The full council also provides input into the state plan and needs assessment planning processes regularly during the quarterly meetings.
- The SRC Consumer Input and Public Outreach Committee planned and conducted two stakeholder input forums in Greensboro, NC and Morganton, NC and incorporated the input into the recommendations presented below.
- Over the course of the FFY 2012, the SRC's Policy and Rules Committee reviewed and provided feedback on policy drafts including subjects pertaining to the following areas: feedback on policy

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff use of social media• Transition-age student applications• Personal assistance service policy revisions• Case transfer policy• Required unit manager approvals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Durable medical equipment• Displacement prevention procedures• Telecommunicative & assistive devices• Money follows the person policy revisions• Internship services• Financial eligibility & comparable benefits
---	--

drafts including subjects pertaining to the following areas:

- Policy Manual changes were also discussed and how the information would be integrated into the case management system known as Business Electronic Access Management (BEAM). BEAM will be able to maintain electronic documents while creating greater efficiencies in making determinations.

Other recommendations NC DVRS has received from the North Carolina State Rehabilitation Council:

Recommendation 1: In support of their strategic plan pertaining to legislative advocacy, the Council recommended again this year for the Division to prepare for their distribution, customized reports for each NC legislative district featuring the beneficial return on investment that the VR program has on consumers and on the economy of each district within NC.

Division's Response: The Division again supported this request, revising the customized reports based on input and also added success stories to provide a human element to the data presented. The reports were prepared and distributed to all NC Legislators a month earlier than the previous year.

Recommendation 2: In order to strengthen the Division's ability to effectively demonstrate the value of offering self-employment as a viable employment option, the Council recommends in addition to demonstrating a consumer's earnings increase, to develop a method to measure and analyze the indirect benefit of this service, e.g., positive impact on MH status or fewer hospitalizations, increased community engagement, etc.

Division's Response: The Division supports this recommendation and during FFY 2014 plans to work with the Division's Self-employment specialist, Planning and Evaluation unit, interested Council members and relevant subject matter experts to develop such an instrument and an implementation plan.

Recommendation 3: The Council recommended for the Division to submit a request to the DHHS legislative liaison to make changes in language to N.C.G.S. 138-5(a)(1) to bring the mileage reimbursement rate in line with the Federal IRS standard rate for mileage reimbursement for travel related to meeting attendance and participation in Council official business.

Division's Response: The Division prepared the recommended changes and submitted them through the designated channels and are awaiting changes to be made to the statute.

Recommendation 4: The Council recommended for the quarterly full council meetings to contain a standing item for the Client Assistance Program to give an activity update. Further, the council recommended for a standardized set of questions and topic areas to be provided as a standard guideline to be used for regional director and/or a regional unit manager reports during quarterly meetings to allow managers to provide updates for local activities, developments and to express any concerns to the Council.

Division's Response: The Division has incorporated the recommended changes.

Recommendation 5: The Council recommends to continue jointly conducting consumer input sessions to be held twice annually collecting input from various communities across the state.

Division's Response: The Division will continue to actively support jointly conducted input sessions twice annually canvassing various communities across the state about their perception of how the VR program is addressing their vocational rehabilitation needs through its service provision.

Recommendation 6: The Council recommends the Division to continue to assess the intake and eligibility determination process to see if it can be streamlined and made as uniform as possible, so the consumer understands what is required to be made eligible for services and what they can do to assist with this process to help expedite their rehabilitation process.

Division's Response: The Division will continue to review this as it implements the new electronic casework management system and then further evaluate any further adjustments to be made.

Recommendation 7: In order to enable council members to participate in council meetings to the greatest extent possible, the Council has recommended for the Division to explore alternative meeting methods using technology allowing remote call-in or remote access participation.

Division's Response: The Division supports this recommendation and will continue to work with Council members to identify technological solutions that will sufficiently enable their remote participation.

Public Participation in the State Plan Process In addition to posting the draft state plan goals on the Division's public website and providing an active e-mail link for submitting comments, the Division conducted six public meetings throughout the state regarding the North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation State Plan and the Supported Employment Program State Plan Supplement. The meeting locations included Asheville, Charlotte, Burlington, Rocky Mount, Fayetteville, and Wilmington. The public meetings were held after providing adequate notice of the meetings and providing procedures for the public, including individuals with disabilities, to comment on state plan content, service or policy concerns for the development of the FFY 2014 State Plan. Notices of the public meetings were sent to a comprehensive and diverse list of individuals, advocacy groups and other interested stakeholders via email, list serves and press releases. Additionally, invitations to 500-1500 active consumers per location were also mailed out to individuals located within easy driving distance to the public input meetings. For this cycle, an unprecedented action was taken through sending an additional 9,000 invitations to active consumers using e-mail addresses resident within the Division's electronic case management system. Alternate communication formats were made available at the public meetings upon request and sign language interpreters were present at all meetings, to enable anyone who attended and required the services to participate fully. The public was encouraged to provide input into the State Plan annual update process in a variety of ways including: oral comments at any public meeting, fax, and email, through website or other submission of written comments for a designated period. The published deadline to submit written input into the FFY 2014 State Plan was June 1, 2013.

The following is a summary of the major comments from the public meetings and submitted written comments relative to the State Plan and NC DVRS' Service Program:

Process, Communication & Capacity: <>Some consumers or parents had attended public input meetings at all locations for specific guidance pertaining to the progress of their case or what they are to expect as part of the upcoming processes. They had specific questions or concerns pertaining to their unique case, but no specific input relating to systemic improvement other than encouraging increased communication between staff and the customer and anything we can do to continue to streamline and clarify the steps in the rehabilitation process. <>A parent of a student mentioned that it was her perception that the caseload size for transition counselors was too large and seeing a consumer once every three months was not enough attention. <> At the Wilmington input session, there was dialogue between SRC members and advocates concerning interactions between consumers and counseling staff, that it is important for staff to relate in a way that no one feels being talked down to. SRC members had indicated that it is important for consumers to be their own self-advocate if possible first and to indicate to the counselor of any dissatisfaction with their interactions at the earliest point possible for best results prior to resorting to other methods of addressing any ineffective communication between counselors and consumers.

Community Rehabilitation Program Services: <> In the Rocky Mount public input session, a community rehabilitation program had indicated that the Social Security Administration had recently decided to refund some of the Work Incentive Planning and Assistance/benefits counseling services and that it would be providing services to over 30 counties in the eastern region of the state and that collaboration in serving the consumers within that state would be necessary for best impact. <> At the Charlotte input session, a community partner had expressed interest in the proposed performance-based milestone payment system and how it would improve quality and collaboration and how the system would not cause service providers to refuse to work with the most challenging cases. <> At the Fayetteville input session, parents/guardians of individuals with significant cognitive impairments expressed concern about the lack of employment or volunteer opportunities or Adult Day Vocational Programs that were available and that they were concerned that since leaving the group home there were no community alternatives available. <> At the Asheville input session, a consumer who had received supported employment placement opportunities had commented that several of the individuals who had supported him had been terminated due to shortages in funding. <> At the Wilmington input session, a parent of an individual who is highly functioning with autism had expressed concern that because of her son's lack of social skills, when employers called the home following up on her son's application, there was a disconnect and that the application process should be worked out through the CRP's job coach so that the job coach can explain the situation to the employer.

School-to-Work Transition Services: <> At the Morganton input session, a parent of a highly functioning autistic individual who had successfully completed post-secondary training had indicated that her son needed additional assistance with interacting with employers and the barrier he was experiencing was his inability to successfully interview to get past that phase in his employment process and that the Division should be cognizant of these needs. <> At the Asheville input session a parent from a few counties away from Asheville had commented that a sheltered workshop should never be the only option for a transitioning individual with a cognitive/intellectual disability and that the 2-year university participation program at Western Carolina University (WCU) had provided her son with a positive experience with job sampling opportunities that she felt better equipped him for his first employment opportunity. An additional point was made that there is a need for additional service providers in Cherokee, Clay, and Graham counties besides sheltered workshops and that advocates that the WCU program is a great alternative provider. <> At the Fayetteville input session, several parents or guardians had expressed concern over lack of progress toward their specific cases or had specific questions pertaining to roles and responsibilities of IEP team members. <> At the Wilmington input session, several inquiries related to consumers who had undergraduate degrees that were interested in having staff to be more knowledgeable about Federal job opportunities and application processes for individuals with disabilities as well as knowledge of national employment opportunities beyond those in the local economy. Additionally, several individuals were interest in finding out what the VR program could do for them should they wish to pursue higher level employment or post-graduate training. <> Through written input Disability Rights North Carolina encouraged the Division to continue to work toward earlier intervention in the transition process of young people with disabilities from school to work supporting the belief that students with significant disabilities and their families need exposure to the culture of employment as early as possible. The organization expressed they would like to see VR involvement with students with the most significant disabilities as early as middle school, beginning to build that expectation that employment is the first and best option for all individuals, regardless of disabilities. Furthermore, the specific recommendations were provided:

☐ Help coordinate with LEAs a list of formal and informal assessments to be administered for the purpose of developing transition plans. Transition assessments form the foundation of a student's

postsecondary transition plan. The failure to conduct age-appropriate assessments results in the development of inappropriate transition plans.

□ Help improve goal-setting for students to receive transition services that will help them become competitively employed or stay in higher education programs. Transition goals that are vague, unrealistic and immeasurable cause students substantial educational losses as students do not receive any services that are calculated to support post-secondary skills after high school.

□ Help identify and provide transition services that provide students meaningful opportunities to achieve their post-secondary goals. The failure to identify and provide specific activities and services denies students the opportunity to achieve post-secondary goals and to acquire skills intended to help them become more independent and employable.

Collaboration: <> At the Charlotte input session an individual representing a support group for individuals of working age who have experienced disabling conditions caused by stroke, expressed concern that organizations such as the Division's might not be appropriately capturing and coding stroke as a cause for an individual's disability and the magnitude of the problem among working-aged individuals might not be receiving the attention it should and that more information about the Division's services could be made available as early as possible to individuals who experience a stroke.

<> Disability Rights NC expressed concern with the procedures for referrals between DVR and local management entities/managed-care organizations to maximize access to employment services for its clients, in that their impression is that individuals receiving services from local management entities are often unconnected with services offered by DVR, and vice-versa, and recommended to continue progress toward addressing this. <> Several members of SAIL (Self Advocates for Independent Living) of Coastal Carolina at the Wilmington input session had encouraged staff from the local VR office to join their monthly roundtable meeting with other collaborators to focus on addressing remaining barriers—at least one staff member committed to regularly attending.

Identified Barriers/Needs: <> At the Morganton input session, an individual who is deaf noted that the Division should be aware that the professionalism of an interpreter accommodating an individual who is deaf during an interview is critical and can influence the outcome of an interview. <> An individual who had received supported employment services in the past had expressed his successful employment-related and personal accomplishments that were made as a result of his past employment opportunities, but had indicated that funding had ended and he was now without a job again and needed a community rehabilitation program who had worked well with him in the past to receive additional funding to help him return to work.

Positive Testimonies: <> At the Burlington public input forum an individual and their employer provided positive testimony about how well they had worked with the Burlington office over the years and had experienced yet another positive situation with a consumer who was able to find work with them after a 9-year period where the individual's disability had prevented the individual's success. The employer indicated that they will only work with VR whenever they have a staffing need in the future.<> Disability Rights North Carolina expressed appreciation for the Division's response to earlier requests through providing its case service policies on line via its public web site and has found it to be very helpful to the organization's attorneys, advocates, and consumers.<> At the Wilmington input session, three individuals had positive testimonies regarding the services they received from the local office that they had received hope in desperate situations.

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE NC DVRS CONSUMER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS FOR FFY 2012*: *A more complete report is available; a summary is included here since MIS system space limitation prevents inclusion of the full report.

BACKGROUND: The consumer satisfaction survey is conducted to meet the mandate of Section 105 (c) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which states that the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) shall, among performing other required functions: Conduct a review and analysis of the effectiveness of, and client satisfaction with:

(A) the functions performed by the designated State agency; (B) vocational rehabilitation services provided by State agencies and other public and private entities responsible for providing vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this Act; (C) employment outcomes achieved by eligible individuals receiving services under this title, including the availability of health and other employment benefits in connection with such employment outcomes.

Current Survey Process: The current survey process is conducted by the State Rehabilitation Council in cooperation with Division Management and staff of the Planning and Evaluation Unit of the Division. The Division contracts with a community rehabilitation program to prepare and mail the surveys. The Division also contracts with the North Carolina State University Center for Urban Affairs and Community Services to conduct telephone interview surveys.

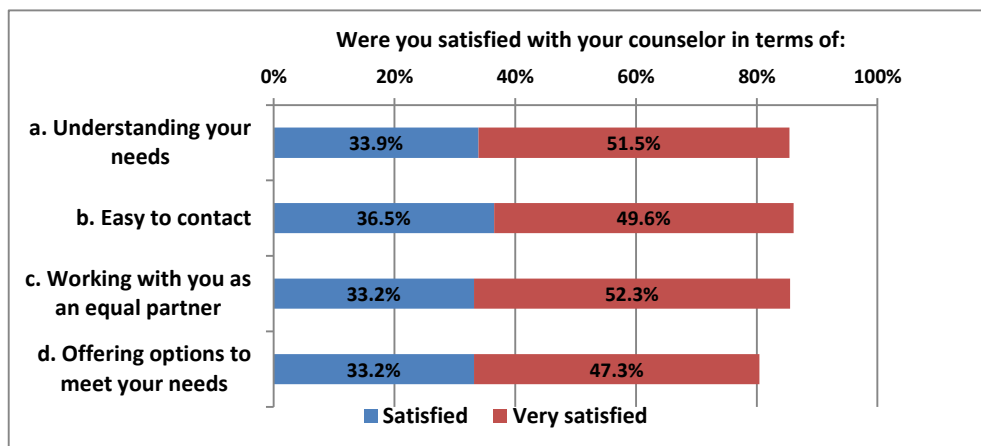
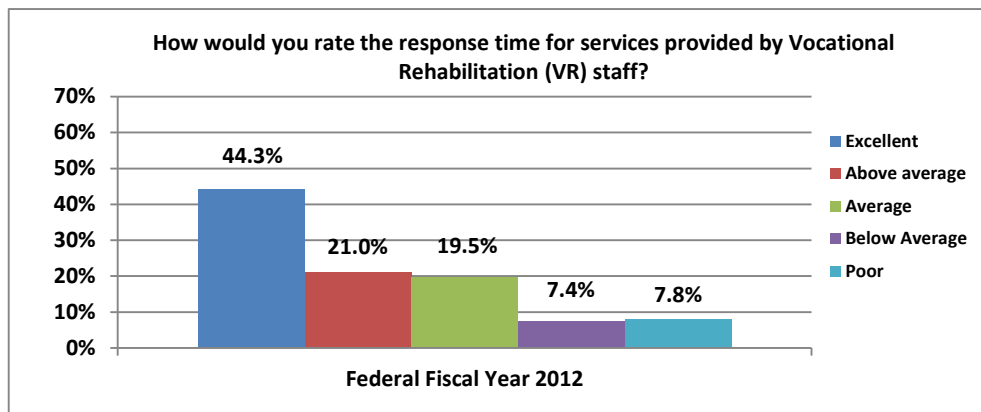
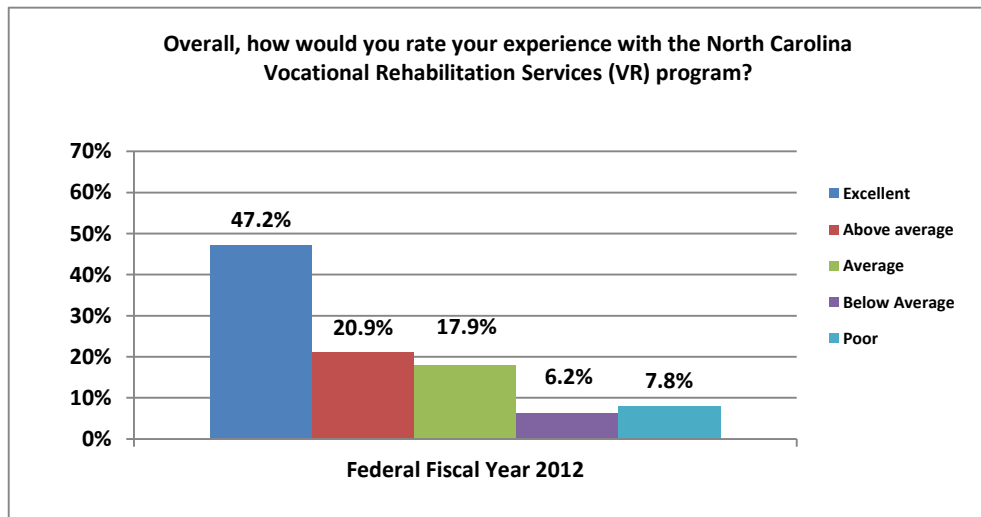
From October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012 (FFY 2012), 11,586 mail-out questionnaires were sent to former consumers of the Division whose cases were closed after receiving services under an individualized plan for employment. These included 6,618 (98%) of the 6,758 individuals who exited the VR program in employment and 4,968 (95%) of the 5,233 consumers who were not successful in obtaining employment after services were provided. The survey package included a letter explaining why they were asked to participate and assured them that their responses would be confidential. The letter included a toll-free number consumers could call for any assistance needed. The survey was also made available in alternative formats, including an online version.

Of the 11,586 total survey questionnaires that were mailed, 1,463 (12.6%) were returned as undeliverable due to an outdated or otherwise incorrect mailing address. Of the 10,123 mail-outs with valid addresses, 1,260 (12.4%) were completed and returned, and 10 surveys (< 1%) were completed online. From a randomized sample of non-respondents, 534 telephone surveys completed by the North Carolina State University, Center for Urban Affairs and Community Services. With the telephone surveys included, the response rate was 17.8% when adjusting the rate for the surveys returned as undeliverable. Of the 1,804 responses, 1,300 (72%) were from individuals who had exited the VR Program successfully in employment. The adjusted response rate for successful case closures (21.3%) was 1.7 times greater than that of individuals whose cases were closed unsuccessfully (12.5%).

Overview of Satisfaction Survey: The survey questionnaire consists of 9 items. The first identifies whether the person who completed the survey is the actual consumer or a family member or caregiver. Question 2 includes a battery of 8 subquestions designed to measure the degree to which consumers were helped by the VR program in various respects (e.g., deciding on job choices, training, job placement, etc.). Question 3 asks the consumer to rate the response time of services provided by VR staff. Questions 4 and 5 ask whether consumers received information about the Client Assistance Program and if they were informed of their right to appeal Division decisions. Questions 6 and 7 measure the consumer's satisfaction with their counselor and level of personal involvement in their rehabilitation program. Question 8 is a multiple response item that identifies barriers consumers experienced while obtaining

employment. Question 9 asks consumers to rate their overall experience with the North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

The charts below and on the following page reflect the FFY 2012 survey's aggregate responses on three critical parameters of consumer satisfaction.



Attachment 4.7(b)(3) Request for Waiver of Statewideness

Identify the types of services to be provided by the program for which the waiver of statewideness is requested.

The waiver request should also include:

- a written assurance from the local public agency that it will make available to the designated state unit the non-federal share of funds;
- a written assurance that designated state unit approval will be obtained for each proposed service before it is put into effect;
- a written assurance that all state plan requirements will apply to all services approved under the waiver.

This attachment does not apply to the NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services for the FFY 2014

Attachment 4.8(b)(1) Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Investment System

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system with respect to

- Federal, state, and local agencies and programs;
- if applicable, Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture; and
- if applicable, state use contracting programs.

Division's Response:

The NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (NC DVRS) extensively collaborates with and utilizes the services of federal, state, and local entities to achieve its mission on behalf of NC citizens with disabilities. The Division routinely pursues improving its overall effectiveness through working relationships, partnerships, contracts and formal or informal agreements with entities at all these levels. NC DVRS maintains written cooperative agreements with various federal, state, and local agencies. These include but are not limited to the Social Security Administration; the United States Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs; the North Carolina Division of Medical Assistance; the North Carolina Division of Services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing; NC Office of Long Term Services and Supports; NC Division of Social Services; the North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse; and numerous local school systems, hospitals, and physical medicine and rehabilitation centers. The Easter Seals / United Cerebral Palsy Society of North Carolina, the National Multiple Sclerosis Society, the American Heart Association, and the North Carolina Arthritis Foundation are examples of consumer and advocacy groups for individuals with disabilities with which the Division has agreements. The above referenced agreements facilitate the maintenance of the highest feasible level of communication and coordination in the joint development and implementation of operational methods including, where applicable: • Assisting consumers, their families, and advocates in accessing services from the Division and from the other agencies and entities; • Referral of individuals who have disabilities and especially those who have severe disabilities to the Division for services; • Referral by the Division to other agencies or entities for the various supportive services and assistance available; • Determination of the responsibility of each agency or entity in making referrals, in serving individuals jointly, and in identifying resources; • Provision of educational information regarding the services, including equipment and assistive technology, available and eligibility criteria of the Division and of the other agency or entity; • Joint training of staff in areas pertaining to services available and procedures of the Division and the other agency or entity; • Shared funding for Division position and program costs and co-location of Division staff with staff from the other agency or entity where co-location would be effective and feasible; • Developing means to promote greater awareness and greater utilization of the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act; • Provision for the sharing of information between agencies upon receipt of client permission and with regard to maintaining confidentiality. • Establishing an evaluation system to determine levels of competency of paraprofessionals such as interpreters for the deaf who wish to serve as vendors for the Division; • Enhancing post-secondary training supports to assist in the transition to employment; • Improving the public image of the employment capabilities of individuals in various disability groups; • Assessing the effectiveness of the cooperative agreements; • Jointly promoting improvement in the quality of life through comprehensive approaches to the improved health of consumers jointly served and through services to family members; jointly promoting ethical research practices to develop improved medical and other disability related interventions; • Promoting systems change through collaborative projects; • Expanding services and community resources for unserved and

underserved groups; • Promotion of collaboration at the community office level offices between the Division and other agencies and entities; • Through joint planning councils, providing joint input from the Division and from other agencies and entities for budgeting, service delivery, and policy changes for block grants, special demonstration projects, and other grants; • Providing input regarding formulation of vocational services provided by other agencies and entities.

Coordination with the North Carolina Statewide Independent Living Council and Independent Living Centers: Centers for Independent Living (CILs) are consumer-controlled, cross-disability, community-based non-residential, private non-profit organizations that provide programs and services for people with all types of disabilities and their families. The goal of CILs is to promote and support opportunities for people with disabilities to fully participate in an integrated community and search for the possibilities to live as they choose. These centers are funded through Title VII of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Information and referral, independent living skills training, advocacy, and peer counseling are the four core services each center provides. In addition to these core services, the centers may provide additional services which are tailored to serve individuals with disabilities in their service area.

The Centers for Independent Living (CILs) in North Carolina work with the Division's local Vocational Rehabilitation, Independent Living Program and NC Assistive Technology Program staff to coordinate services for specific individuals and also to address areas of broader systemic impact such as community education/awareness and outreach to various disability groups.

The Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) is an independent non-profit council (not an entity within a state agency) that is established under Section 705 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. The majority of its members are individuals with disabilities. The SILC is responsible for jointly developing and endorsing the State Plan for Independent Living in conjunction with the designated state unit (NC DVRS and NC Division of Services for the Blind). The duties of the SILC are to monitor, review, and evaluate the implementation of the State Plan for Independent Living. Further, the SILC is mandated to coordinate activities with the State Rehabilitation Council and other councils that address the needs of specific disability populations.

Interagency Cooperation and Use of Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the USDA:

The Division is actively collaborating with the USDA-funded statewide AgrAbility program whose mission is to educate and assist NC farmers, ranchers, farmworkers and their family members who have disabilities to enable them to remain actively engaged in production agriculture. The collaborative involves NC Agricultural and Technical State University, NC State University Bio and Agricultural Engineering Department, East Carolina University Agromedicine Institute, NC Cooperative Extension, and the NC network of Centers for Independent Living.

Further, the Division's consumer's benefit through the expertise and access to USDA programs, program funding and loans available through the NC Rural Center, which is represented through the Division's Small Business Advisory Committee (SBAC).

State Use Contracting Program: At this time, NC DVRS does not directly engage in formally established state use contracting program, where commodities or service determined to be of use to state agencies are purchased from community-based rehabilitation programs employing and training individuals with significant disabilities. The Division is, however, engaged in a contract with a community-based rehabilitation program for the envelope stuffing, sorting, processing and mailing of the Division's client satisfaction surveys. Furthermore, NC DVRS does sponsor activities through several community rehabilitation programs that provide training services to the Division's consumers through contracts with entities such as the NC Department of Transportation for maintenance of facilities and distribution of safety campaign materials.

Attachment 4.8(b)(2) Coordination with Education Officials

- Describe the designated state unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including provisions for the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment before each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting or, if the designated state unit is operating on an order of selection, before each eligible student able to be served under the order leaves the school setting.
- Provide information on the formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency with respect to
 - consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;
 - transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs;
 - roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
 - procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

PART I: Description of Plans, Policies and Procedures for Coordination with Education

Officials to Facilitate Provision of Transitional Services: General overview: The NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation has renewed its state level memorandum of agreement (MOA) with NC Department of Public Instruction which outlines a collaborative partnership between the two agencies to provide state level approval and support for enhanced transition services to serve youth with disabilities. The Program Specialist for Transition Services compiles an annual report, as requested in our MOA, for NCDPI summarizing VR activity for the state fiscal year. The VR unit offices and local education agencies (LEA) customize a local MOA for their community to outline how they will work closely together, along with the local transition team to target specific needs in the agreement to provide transition services. The MOA allows for collaboration between VR staff and school transition personnel, sharing of information, joint participation in students' IEP meetings, and incorporating individualized transition portion of the IEP into the IPE. The Division's 91 local MOAs with the 115 LEAs in NC fund 111 school counselors and additional VR staff including casework assistants, technicians, vocational evaluators and business relations representatives (formerly job placement specialists) available to provide VR transition services in the local community. In areas where there is not an MOA in place, the local manager has designated a VR counselor to directly serve the youth with disabilities in the local schools. NC DVRS updated the transition policy in 2003 to emphasize the intense efforts to serve transition aged youth. Each VR unit office developed an action plan of transition activities to enhance areas such as: • general outreach and information exchange to local school system; • outreach to younger students; • meeting with the transition coordinator; • building administrative support for the transition program; • relationship and transition team building with school transition staff; • staff development for VR and school transition personnel; • expanded involvement with WIA, Mental Health and other adult agencies that support the Individualized Education plan (IEP) and the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE); • attending IEP meetings and identifying students who are at risk for dropping out. Many of NC public school personnel directly involved in providing transition services to students with disabilities are members of the

national and North Carolina's division of the professional organization through the Council for Exceptional Children / Division of Career Development and Transition (DCDT). Since 2004, the VR state program specialist and VR school transition counselors have participated in NC-DCDT regional training meetings and the annual training conference sponsored by NC's DCDT. This participation allows for cooperative training and information sharing for improved partnerships between NC DVRS and school systems toward the provision of transition services in the local communities. Additionally, specific VR transition counselor training with LEA representation has been scheduled to address some specific training needs of our VR counselors and to foster greater teambuilding with our LEAs.

Plans for Coordination with Education Officials: The Division plans to maintain and strengthen its programmatic relationships with school transition services through its continued active participation by the Division's Transition Specialist and a school counselor on the State Capacity Building Team for Transition. This team, including NC Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) leadership, NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, University Center for Development and Learning, Parent/Child Advocacy Agency, Business Representative and Local Education Agency (LEA) representative was formed in recent years to develop state-wide goals and provide better coordinated transition activities for students with disabilities to achieve better results with post-school outcomes, including obtaining employment or attending post-secondary education. Currently, the Statewide Transition Team is in process of finalizing a Transition Toolkit for teachers and anticipates the development of toolkits for parents, students, and agencies that will be individualized at the local level .

Description of Policies and Procedures for Coordination with Education Officials: Through its casework policy, NC DVRS requires each local VR office with vocational rehabilitation counseling staff serving on a local school transition services team to send an annual report to the school systems with which the Division has a third party cooperatively funded program. This report includes data about services and expenditures for students with disabilities provided by the Division, and also addresses how VR staff have worked with school staff in transition planning for students with significant and most significant disabilities. The annual report also addresses how the Division is partnering with the school system to address the work experience requirements of the Occupational Course of Study. Furthermore, a vocational rehabilitation counselor is assigned to serve each high school where no formal cooperative agreement exists. The designated staff visits these schools on an itinerant basis and implements a system for referral generation and their subsequent processing. This approach is expected to include a mechanism for identifying students with disabilities and at risk for dropping out of school. In order to plan effectively for the transition needs of students with disabilities in collaboration with other agencies and organizations, the Division's counselors are expected to be active participants addressing the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting transition issues when possible. NC DVRS vocational rehabilitation counselors are expected to participate both directly in IEP meetings and indirectly by other means in planning for the needs of VR clients. The Occupational Course of Study, as a pathway to an NC high school diploma, requires that students with marked disabilities that are eligible for this pathway participate in a specific number of hours of school-based, community/volunteer-based and competitive work experiences as part of the requirements. The implementation of this pathway in 2000 has enhanced VR's ability to develop an IPE to provide services specific to youth in transition early within the high school experience prior to exiting. Two specific services "In School Work Adjustment" and "Community Based Assessment and Training" are VR services provided through the IPE to support the student's success in the OCS pathway to a NC high school diploma. It encourages the student to develop an IPE for transition from school to work within the second and or third year of high school.

PART II: Description of Development and Approval of Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for Transitioning Students:

The Division's casework policies addressing the provision of transition services defines transition services as a coordinated set of activities for a student designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. Furthermore, NC DVRS policy states that the coordinated set of activities must be based upon the individual student's preferences and interests, and must include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. Finally, NC DVRS casework policies require that transition services must promote or facilitate the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the student's individualized plan for employment. In order to plan effectively for the transition needs of students with disabilities in collaboration with other agencies and organizations, NC DVRS rehabilitation counselors are expected to be active participants addressing the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting transition issues when possible. Counselors are expected to participate both directly in IEP meetings and indirectly by other means in planning for the needs of VR consumers. A copy of the transition portion of the IEP is required to be maintained in the case record. Prior to developing the IPE, the VR counselor reviews the Individual Transition Plan (ITP) component for the Individual Education Plan and records any relevant ITP objectives as part of the IPE. The intent of this review is to coordinate educational programming and vocational programming for the benefit of the VR consumer. Additionally, the Division's policy stipulates that the development of the IPE with a student must be based on interest, aptitude, capabilities, strengths and informed choice. The job choice on the IPE for a student in transition may indicate a family of jobs rather than a specific job code, e.g., Health Care Worker, Office Work, Protective Services (Police, Fireman, Security Guard, etc.). Division policy does require career exploration to be provided and documented in order to determine a more specific goal. Amended job choices including amendments at closure, must be accompanied by documentation reflecting the process and services that had an impact on the final job choice (job shadowing, job sampling, guidance and counseling). Moreover, NC DVRS casework policy stipulates that the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment must be completed as early as possible during the transition planning process but, at the latest, by the time each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting. This includes students with disabilities who are eligible for VR services including eligible students served by the school under an IEP.

PART III: Description of the Formal Interagency Agreement between NC DVRS and the State Education Agencies:

In order to assure effective facilitation of the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, NC DVRS maintains both a joint formal agreement with the Exceptional Children and Career Technical Education Divisions of NC Department of Public Instruction and also maintains 91 separately held formal agreements with local education agencies (LEA's) or school programs. Within the formal interagency agreement between NC DVRS and NC DPI, mutual interagency responsibilities include:

- Mutual participation of appropriate personnel in the development of the transition component of the Individualized Education Program and the Individualized Plan for Employment for students with disabilities.
- Designation of an individual from Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Exceptional Children and Career Technical Education Divisions to serve as liaison with each other to represent the services of the two agencies.
- Exchange of information deemed pertinent and of mutual concern regarding service delivery.
- Interagency cooperation in transition planning for students with disabilities.
- A mutual system to be developed and maintained to ensure that appropriate referrals are made to each party.

Part IIIA. Consultation and technical assistance to assist Educational Agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services:

A description of NC DVRS responsibilities pertaining to this area: Within the formal interagency agreement, the NC DVRS has responsibility to ensure the provision of an appropriate program of vocational rehabilitation services to each perspective VR client by:

- Providing administrative, technical and consultative services when needed through local, regional and state vocational rehabilitation services' staff to local school administrative units serving students with disabilities in transition programs.
- NC DVRS' program specialist for transition services and the state program consultant for intellectual disabilities and secondary education with DPI, cooperatively provide programmatic information, training and support to local school systems and to VR transition staff to maintain and enhance the quality of transition services for successful post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.
- The NC DVRS specialist provides regular technical support to schools by participating in and presenting at transition training institutes regarding transition services and adult service agencies.
- Also, visiting and providing consultation and training at the local schools with transition teachers, coordinators, job coaches etc.
- Screening students with disabilities referred to NC DVRS by the local school administrators to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services.
- Eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services is based on the presence of a physical or mental impairment which for the individual constitutes a substantial impediment to employment.
- The student must require vocational rehabilitation service to prepare for, secure, retain or regain employment.
- The determination of eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services provided by NC DVRS is the sole responsibility of NC DVRS and is not delegated.
- Administering all aspects of the NC DVRS vocational rehabilitation program services including the determination of eligibility, diagnostic and evaluation services, rehabilitation planning, transition services and the provision of a program of vocational rehabilitation services.
- Some services are subject to the student's financial eligibility and/or comparable benefits.
- Providing vocational assessment trial work and adjustment services to students with disabilities who have an identified need and meet eligibility requirements.
- Providing appropriate data to the Exceptional Children Division about the number of school age students served by NC DVRS, by disability, age, types of services provided and post-school employment outcome through annual reporting
- Promoting the development of cooperative agreements between NC DVRS and local school administrative units that include the following components:
 - Roles of each agency;
 - Financial responsibilities;
 - Vocational Rehabilitation staffing and supervision by the NC DVRS;
 - Procedures for outreach, referral, liaison staff between the parties, eligibility, delivery of services, dispute resolutions, sharing of appropriate client information and student involvement;
 - Joint staff development and training;
 - Services to students with disabilities who are not receiving special education services;
 - Assurances of compliance with Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 105-17), Carl Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act (P.L. 105-332), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended.
- Along with the local educational agency, provide and implement an ongoing evaluation of the cooperative efforts with a formal annual review of the proposed budget and any necessary interagency agreement updates.

A description of Exceptional Children Division's responsibilities pertaining to this area:

Through the formal interagency agreement in place, the Exceptional Children Division of the NC DPI has the following responsibilities with respect to the provision of technical assistance and consultation with local educational agencies:

- Provide technical assistance to local school administrative units to assure access for students with disabilities in appropriate Career and Technical Education Programs based on recommendations of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team;
- Assist local school administrative units in the planning, development and implementation of transition services for students with disabilities.
- Provide appropriate data to NC DVRS pertaining to students needing services, i.e. North Carolina Department of Public Instruction Certified Child Count for Special Education.
- Inform local school administrative units of services available from NC DVRS and promote referral generation.
- Promote the provision of psychological, vocational, assistive

technology, and educational assessment and work adjustment services by local school administrative units for students with disabilities having an identified need. • Promote the development of cooperative agreements between Vocational Rehabilitation Services and local school administrative units in keeping with 34 C.F.R. Section 361.38 Protection, Use, and Release of Personal Information.

A description of Career Technical Education Division's responsibilities pertaining to this area:

Through the formal interagency agreement in place, the Career Technical Education Division of the NC DPI has the following responsibilities with respect to the provision of technical assistance and consultation with local educational agencies: • Provide needed consultation to assure the initiation of cooperative career/technical education and internship programs for students with disabilities involved in local school administrative units and other state agencies. • Provide consultative services to local school administrative units and other state agencies and institutions to assure initial placement and maintenance of eligible students with disabilities in Career and Technical Education Programs. • Provide needed consultation to assure the initiation of cooperative career/technical education and internship programs for students with disabilities involved in local school administrative units and other state agencies. • Provide consultative services to local school administrative units and other state agencies and institutions to assure initial placement and maintenance of eligible students with disabilities in Career and Technical Education Programs. • Promote the provision of vocational/technical assessment services, career-decision making training, vocational instruction, and transition planning for students with disabilities in local school administrative units. • Promote career/technical education counseling, cooperative work experience, internships and job placement of students with disabilities by local school administrative units. • Assist local school administrative units in the planning, development, collection of data, and implementation of transition services for students with disabilities.

Part III B. Transition planning by personnel of NC DVRS and the Educational Agencies that facilitates the development and completion of their Individualized Education Programs:

The interagency agreements between NC DVRS and the Education Agencies stipulate that transition planning for students with disabilities will be a cooperative effort. Furthermore, the agreements specifically require mutual participation of appropriate personnel in the development of the transition component of the Individualized Education Program and the Individualized Plan for Employment for students with disabilities. The sharing of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and Individualized Plans for Employment (IPEs) at the local level is strongly encouraged. NC DVRS vocational rehabilitation counselors are required to review a student's transition component of the IEP and incorporate, as appropriate, a description of relevant objectives in the IPE. Furthermore, a comprehensive evaluation will be completed by the State agency on each eligible individual, to the degree necessary, to determine the vocational goal and scope of vocational rehabilitation services to be included in the IPE. The agreements state that the student with the disability is expected to fully participate in the development of the plan and any plan amendments. The agreements specify that the NC DVRS vocational rehabilitation counselors will provide the individuals with information sufficient to make an informed choice among alternative goals, objectives, services, entities providing such services and methods to procure such services. Additionally, the agreement requires that the vocational rehabilitation counselor is to review the IPE with the individual or his/her representative at least once each year.

Part III C. Summary of Roles and Responsibilities, including provisions for determining and developing qualified personnel responsible for transition services: Summary of Roles and Responsibilities of NC DVRS under the agreements: • Provide a program of vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals referred by the third party and to other individuals found eligible for services. • Collaborative development of the transition component of the Individualized Education

Program (IEP) and the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for students with disabilities. • Provide effective and appropriate supervision of the vocational rehabilitation activities and VR staff assigned to provide the services. • Provide administrative and consultative support, in the area of its program responsibilities, to the local education agency. • Share statistical and fiscal reports to other parties as deemed mutually necessary to assure open communication and good administrative practices. • As part of the agreement, NC DVRS Rehabilitation Counselors will provide individuals with information sufficient to make an informed choice among alternative goals, objectives, services, entities providing such services and methods to procure such services. The counselor is to review the IPE with the individual or his/her representative at least once each year. The VR counselor will provide each eligible individual an IPE Handbook wherein there is an appeals process outlined. Information pertaining to the Client Assistance Program (CAP) is included in the handbook. The VR counselor agrees not to close an individual's record as having achieved a successful employment outcome until the person exits school and is determined that the individual has successfully completed the IPE. • conduct an annual survey of students in the school system. • The vocational rehabilitation counselor will place major emphasis on students who are Juniors, Seniors, or potential dropouts. • screen referrals from other sources within the school system to enable students with disabilities who do not have an Individual Educational Plan (IEP) to be considered for vocational rehabilitation services. • Mutually agree to utilize appropriate staff development personnel in the planning and implementation of joint inter-disciplinary team training and/or staff development for purposes of effectively providing transitional services to students with disabilities. • Liaison personnel appropriate and qualified for the provision of transitional services, recommending needed changes and implementing the agreement will be appointed by the administrative units of the parties named in the agreement with the educational agencies.

Part III. D. Summary of Financial Responsibilities of Each Agency: The interagency agreements between NC DVRS and Education Agencies including the NC Department of Public Instruction and Local Educational Agencies/School Boards stipulate the financial responsibilities of each party. Financial responsibilities of respective parties are described in more detail within the agreements between NC DVRS and the LEA's, since this satisfactorily addresses the need. Summary of financial responsibilities of NC DVRS under the agreements: • Provide Federal funding in the amount of 78.7 percent of the agreed-upon annual budget depending on the availability of Federal funds and the program arrangements. • Maintain accounts and supporting documents that will permit an accurate determination at any time of the status of State and Federal participation of expenditures incurred in operation of the rehabilitation program. • Assume responsibility, within the limitation of resources, for the cost of services included in the student's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) according to NC DVRS' established policies and fee schedule. • Within the limitations of available resources, provide case service funds necessary to the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services • Accept financial responsibility for the cost of NC DVRS' portion of cooperative training efforts and maintain proper accounts and records of these activities. Summary of financial responsibilities of the Educational Agency partners under the agreements: • Parties entering into an agreement contribute to NC DVRS an annual cash amount of 21.3 percent of the agreed-upon annual budget. Whereas NC DVRS must provide funds equal to the State's share of planned expenditures as specified in the Federal Act. The local per centum match funds are to consist totally of non-Federal funds that have not or will not be used to match Federal funds other than Federal Vocational Rehabilitation funds used in this program. • Any contribution of funds is made available for expenditure at the sole discretion of the NC DVRS. It is understood that such funds must be spent for rehabilitation services and for the administration of those services; that expenditures must be made under the approved agency State plan; and that expenditures must be made under the control and supervision of the NC DVRS. • Provide all individuals determined eligible for vocational rehabilitation services with those services that are its legal and traditional responsibility, e.g., assistive technology required and included in an individual's IEP, without cost to the NC DVRS. The cooperative program is utilized to

provide services which represent new services or new patterns of services when compared to existing services. • Provide and maintain adequate facilities and office space that is accessible to both staff and individuals with disabilities, private for individual counseling, with conditions that are conducive to confidentiality and counseling. • Accept financial responsibility for the cost of their party's portion of cooperative training efforts and maintain proper accounts and records of these activities.

Part III E. Procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services: NC DVRS ensures that students with disabilities who are not receiving special education services have access to and can receive vocational rehabilitation services, if appropriate, by ensuring outreach to and identification of these students. Outreach to these students occur as early as possible during the transition planning process and must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the vocational rehabilitation program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to eligible individuals. NC DVRS vocational rehabilitation counselors are required to contact persons in the schools responsible for coordinating services to students under IDEA and 504 plans and are instructed to conduct high school surveys in order to identify eligible students with disabilities. The Program Specialist for Transition Services has put forth effort at the state level to formulate relationships with pertinent staff with NC DPI to ensure strong working knowledge of NC DVRS and to encourage staff development programs to include a VR component. The importance of completing outreach to students through non-traditional means to identify students is emphasized in the Division's casework policy. Furthermore, in order to generate appropriate referrals, NC DVRS counseling staff are encouraged to contact other resource personnel within the local schools including social workers, school nurses, occupational, physical and speech therapists. One of the primary goals of the Division's provision of transition services is to work with youth with disabilities who are at risk of dropping out of school or who are age 16. Students who have a definite need for services may be served earlier than that age. There are differences in available staff and in numbers of youth with disabilities in school systems, which impact the attainment of this goal. However, the counselor makes individual eligibility decisions for persons referred to NC DVRS by schools and serves them in keeping with the above goal. Factors to consider for "potential dropout" referrals include: (a) verbal indications by the student of intent to leave school, (b) students with disabilities failing half of course work, and (c) students in danger of not receiving course credits due to excessive absences.

PART IV: Other Evidence and Historical Information Regarding Collaboration with Education Officials: Since 2003, the Division's Transition Specialist and a school counselor have served together with NC DPI representatives and others to form a statewide capacity building team to develop and provide coordinated transition activities for students with disabilities to achieve better results with post-school outcomes, including obtaining employment or attending post-secondary education. The Division's vocational rehabilitation staff participates in an annual Exceptional Children's Conference and regularly scheduled cross training regarding the provision of services at the local level. Specialized cooperative training activities, workshops and conferences have existed over the years and will continue to occur periodically, including both Vocational Rehabilitation staff and educators in conjunction with the requirements of the state's Comprehensive Plan. The Division also increased its efforts to provide Supported Employment services to facilitate transition more effectively. Furthermore, the Division included an emphasis on providing available support services during high school and developed a statewide budget for Community-Based Assessment, in order to expand this opportunity for students. This service supports all pathways to achieve a high school diploma. The Occupational Course of Study enables students with significant disabilities to partially fulfill the requirements for a high school diploma through work experience. NC DVRS has developed the use of paid internships to assist in this requirement. Every year the Division participates in the North Carolina Exceptional Children's Conference along with county school systems and the NC Department of Public Instruction. During FFY 2012, the Team for State Capacity Building:

Secondary Education and Transition Services completed the annual review and update of the Transition Plan for North Carolina. The plan and team is directed by the tool provided by the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) to establish and enhance transition services to states. Currently, this team is developing a transition toolkit for teachers and anticipates the development of toolkits for parents and students, as well as agencies.

In 2012-2013, Regional VR Transition Training was planned that addressed critical training needs specific to the transition counselor with team building components with local LEAs. This training has been postponed to 2013-2014 due to budget constraints but will provide opportunities for team building and collaboration at the local level between VR and the LEA. NC DVRS remains active with several organizations serving transitioning youth. With a regular presence on our State Transition Team, NC Youth Collaborative, Post-Secondary Education Alliance, and NC Division of Career Development and Transition, our agency is well represented in our state. We are partnering with NC Assistive Technology Project to develop training for our transition staff as well as regular interviews with our NCDPI partners to share information. Our Program Specialist for Transition Services has provided extensive outreach to our transition counselors and provides in service training as requested to ensure consistency, encourage creativity in service delivery, and to provide updated information. In anticipation of the upcoming year, NC DVRS is excited to see outcomes from three pilot programs that target a traditionally underserved, most significantly disabled population. With 2 Project Search Pilot Programs in their second year, we are hopeful that positive employment outcomes will lay the ground work for expansion of Project Search in our state. Our third pilot project involves post-secondary education for individuals with developmental disabilities. NC DVRS has worked closely with the development of this program to ensure strong vocational components are built into the two year certificate program. We are happy to support the development of two unique skills training programs that are regionally relevant to the labor market including a gluten free bakery in the western part of our state and a construction training facility, both targeting transitioning youth with disabilities.

We look forward to our continued collaboration with NCDPI and the development of stronger relationships with Career and Technical Educators as well as other ancillary staff in our local schools to ensure we are reaching a broader range of students and offering the opportunity to explore services through NC DVR.

Attachment 4.8(b)(3) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

Describe the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers.

Division's Response:

Private non-profit providers of rehabilitation services are necessary and valuable partners in the delivery of the array of services needed by the individuals eligible for VR services within the state. The Division routinely seeks out such partnerships especially in geographic areas where additional services and/or service provider choices need to be established. The NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (NC DVRS) establishes and maintains contracts or agreements with over 120 non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers providing an array of services to the Division's consumers. Fifty six (56) private-non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers have established performance-based contracts with the Division, where the organizations are administered funds when an individual receiving services within their program has achieved designated goals or "milestones" on their way toward their ultimate goal of competitive employment. The remainder of the non-profit private service providers is projected to be fully transitioned from a "fee for services" payment system to a "milestone" payment system during FFY 2014. Details of this system and its implementation are being developed in collaboration with the Community Rehabilitation provider community through representation via the CRP-DVRS steering subcommittee and through feedback solicitations made via web-based feedback mechanisms.

Presently, the Division has established five (5) contracts with private non-profit service providers providing transitional employment services for the Division's consumers who are transitioning from facility-based settings to community-based settings. A private non-profit service provider can enter into an agreement or contract with the Division once it has gone through the Division's vendor approval process, by which a candidate service provider demonstrates its ability to provide services that meet established standards while fully compliant with all applicable state and Federal requirements. Site reviews are conducted to assure that programs and services are accessible to individuals served by the Division. Service rates are based largely on program costs, rates that have been established through researching regional market rates, or through competitive processes. Contracts are implemented through the Division's Center of Excellence Committee (COE), which is a committee established by the NC Department of Health and Human Services Office of Procurement and Contract Services. The committee's purpose is to identify and approve program needs, produce clear meaningful data, identify and approve outcomes, train and assist division/office program staff regarding the contractual procurement of services and reassessment of contract services. The COE includes senior management (director, section chiefs, budget officer) support and involvement. In addition to senior management, the COE includes subject matter experts in contracting, budgeting, programming, policy-making, and technology as applicable. The COE provides continuity to maintain a knowledge base about programs that can include evaluations of several contract services over long periods of time. This approach shifts the focus from contract processing to program management, ensuring that the scope of work for the service provider is tied to results.

Collaboration with the Lumbee Tribe and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians: During FFY 2008, both the Lumbee Tribe and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians became recipients of RSA's American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) discretionary grants.

Lumbee Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program: Following an appointment during FFY 2009, the program director for the Lumbee Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation program (LTVRS) has been a participating member of the State Rehabilitation Council and has regularly attended quarterly meetings. The majority of the collaborative activity between LTVRS and the Division has occurred in the south central geographical region of the state, where the tribe is established. NC DVRS managers located within that region and LTVRS staff developed strategies for interagency referral and information sharing that

assist with eligibility determinations and the development of individualized plans for employment for individuals within the covered population. Referrals are regularly made between both agencies. In order to strengthen and clarify the procedures and expectations of both agencies relating to casework, resource, and training collaboration, an interagency agreement was developed and implemented on 9/28/2009.

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians: Much of the collaboration between the Eastern Band of Cherokee Tribe and the Division occurs through Vocational Opportunities of Cherokee, Inc., the community rehabilitation program that provides vocational evaluation, work adjustment, and other vocationally-oriented training services for individuals with disabilities who reside on their reservation. The Division does have a contract in place with Vocational Opportunities of Cherokee, Inc. (VOCI) for the purchase of these services when it is appropriate for NC DVRS clients who are not formally affiliated with the tribe. The Division does have one or two rehabilitation counselors that serve as liaisons with the tribe and VOCI which helps maintain communication channels. Historically, NC DVRS has worked closely with the vocational rehabilitation programs of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians to effectively meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of eligible individuals in their service area through a collaborative relationship. The Division and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians updated their memorandum of agreement 10/19/2009.

Attachment 4.8(b)(4) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

Describe the efforts of the designated state agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide the following services to individuals with the most significant disabilities:

- supported employment services; and
- extended services.

The North Carolina Division of Vocational Services (NC DVRS) has renewed a cooperative agreement with NC Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services (DMHDDSA) to assure that individuals with the most significant disabilities have equal access to vocational rehabilitation and best practice employment services. The relationship between the two divisions has been enhanced over the past several years through changes in personnel at DMHDDSA as well as a change in their focus towards employment as a goal for consumers.

The NC Department of Health and Human Services reached an agreement with the US Department of Justice to address the needs of persons with disabilities living in adult care homes. With this agreement came a resolve to address the needs of those who would like to live independently within their community versus an institutional setting. The agreement called for evidence-based practices to be used. Thus, both NC DVRS and DMHDDSA are partnering together to implement the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) model of supported employment in this state. A minimum of three sites will be located throughout the state with more to come in the following years. This model of supported employment (SE) is also known as the Dartmouth model. Representatives from NC DVRS, Division of Medical Assistance (DMA), and DMHDDSA went to New Hampshire to be trained in this model. Also, DMHDDSA is developing a state definition for supported employment and long term vocational support. Through this definition, if an individual with disabilities chooses NC DVRS as their supported employment provider, and the person is served through the Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organization (LME/MCO) system, they will be able to receive long term vocational supports (LTVS).

Through long term collaborative efforts between NC DVRS and the community rehabilitation program (CRP) providers developing ways in which consumers can be better served through supported employment, the new managed care organizations in the state, the LME/MCOs, will have a dedicated and experienced system of providers to rely on as this state moves forward with developing and funding employment services within the state.

Another partnership NCDVRS has with DMHDDSA is educating the LME/MCO system concerning the IPS model of supported employment (SE) as well as the new state definition of supported employment and long term vocational supports. Representatives from both NC DVRS and DMHDDSA are visiting with the local management entities/managed care organizations to educate staff on the need to identify those who wish to become employed, the different models

of SE, and the need to open up their provider network to utilize many different SE provider agencies.

The established CRP-NC DVRS steering committee continues to review the provision of supported employment services in North Carolina to ensure that funding is optimally utilized so that adequate funding will be available for ongoing extended services. The steering committee continues to address the issues that surround long term support funding such as inconsistencies in the levels of disability-type funding and shortages as well as looks at other best practices that can be incorporated into the NC service delivery system. Further, NC DVRS partners with DMHDDSA to utilize the expertise of national experts through the State Employment Leadership Network (SELN) a project funded through the NC DD Council. The SELN provides technical assistance to implement best practices for employment and systems change where necessary to maximize resources for services.

NC MHDDSA has also written a Medicaid definition to utilize Peer Support Specialists in order to assist consumers to remain on a recovery path. This has opened up an opportunity for NC DVRS to look at authorizing this service for our clients who are not served through the LME/MCO system. Also, NC DVRS is responding to input from field staff and its provider network who indicate that consumers are routinely experiencing discontinuity of service due to a lack of case management services. Therefore, NC DVRS is forming a committee to write a division-specific service definition, policy, and procedures for both peer support services as well as case management services. NC DVRS is also looking into alternative ways such as grants or other collaborative approaches to fund these services other than through case service dollars.

The Division's Program Specialist for Statewide Community Rehabilitation Programs and (6) Regional Community Rehabilitation Specialists provide oversight for CRP's to verify that supported employment services provided by the Division will include a transition period in which extended services will be provided jointly by NC DVRS to assess the individual's performance within their job choice and their individual adjustment and success in their position. This time allows any observed issues to be resolved and an extension of the stabilization phase if necessary.

The continued growth of the statewide network of supported employment service providers has resulted from collaboration between the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and entities such as the North Carolina Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, the North Carolina International Association of Psychosocial Rehabilitation Services, the NC Developmental Disabilities Council and the Mental Health Consumers' Organization. In addition, the North Carolina Association for Persons Supporting Employment First (NCAPSE) provides a forum for focusing on supported employment standards and expanded choices for individuals with the most significant disabilities in the state.

The North Carolina Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (NCARF) and the North Carolina Association for People Supporting Employment First (NCAPSE) have been heavily involved in the continued development of supported employment services, specifically for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. NC DVRS, NCARF, and NCAPSE have collaborated on training events and the development of new supported employment programs across the state

as well as new service models. Community rehabilitation programs (facility-based and free-standing) provide the majority of supported employment services for persons with the most significant disabilities. New community-based options are expanding through collaboration with the community college system, the Post-Secondary Education Alliance, the NC DMHDDSA, and with the addition of contracting private providers. Brain Injury Support Services continue to operate within the state in Goldsboro, Greenville, Winston Salem, Raleigh, and Charlotte areas with an interest in expanding to underserved areas of the state. NC DVRS has recently released a Request For Applications to solicit proposals from providers to provide brain injury services, particularly in areas of the state that are underserved. In addition, transitional employment continues to be an option for PSRs to provide if the PSR is certified thru the International Center for Clubhouse Development. Options are being explored to expand the transitional employment service to community rehabilitation programs that do not have ICCD certification.

The North Carolina Developmental Disabilities Council has sponsored funding for a new collaborative entitled the Alliance for Full Participation (AFP) that has explored innovative employment endeavors through national technical assistance and discussions with a newly established state team, which includes representatives from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The efforts of the AFP led to a draft position statement advocating for an Employment First approach to services delivery within NC. The NC DD council released an RFA and awarded a grant to the Institute for Community Inclusion (ICI), University of Massachusetts to expand employment opportunities around the state and incorporate stakeholders' input through regional summits. These summits are scheduled to begin in summer 2013. The Annual NCAPSE Network on Employment Conference is a forum in which these organizations participate in joint training.

Finally, the Division's Employment and Program Development Section has continued to represent NC DVRS with active membership in several statewide advisory boards, including on the NC Brain Injury Statewide Advisory Council and the Mental Health Planning Council. Established through legislative mandate in the 2003 General Assembly, the NC Brain Injury Advisory Council's mission is to review the current definition of traumatic brain injuries, promote interagency collaboration among state agencies serving this population, study the needs of persons with traumatic brain injuries and their families, make recommendations regarding a comprehensive service system for this population, and promote and implement injury prevention strategies across the state. The Mental Health Planning Council meets quarterly to review the annual Mental Health Block Grant Plan and to submit to the state any recommendations of the Council for modifications to the plans. The Planning Council also serves as an advocate for adults with a serious mental illness, children with a severe emotional disturbance, and other individuals with mental illnesses or emotional problems; and monitors, reviews, and evaluates the adequacy of mental health services within the state.

In addition, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation represents the agency on the "Governor's Focus on Service Members, Veterans, and their Families," a collaborative monthly meeting that serves as a resource clearinghouse for addressing issues of returning veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan and other service members. In addition, as an offshoot of this group, the Division participates in a Statewide Advisory Committee for Operation Recovery, a five-year SAMHSA-funded pilot project in the Charlotte/Mecklenburg County area of NC. The purpose of this pilot

is to create a comprehensive, trauma-integrated jail diversion and support system for US military service veterans. Outreach efforts between NC DVRS, the Veterans Administration, and other military operations have occurred to assure that veterans and their family members are aware of services available to them through the NC DVRS.

Attachment 4.10 Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

1. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

- the number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;
- the number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and
- projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services in the state in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

Division's Response:

The North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services utilizes a personnel system called Building Enterprise Access for North Carolina's Core Operations (BEACON). Reports pertaining to the desired information for the State Plan can be somewhat customized to obtain information on a current basis. The Division's Staff Development section also maintains a comprehensive database on all staff in trainee positions, working toward a Master's Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling. This database includes information on the specific degree and progress toward meeting those requirements. The Division's Program, Policy, Planning and Evaluation section and the Division's Fiscal Services section, maintains and analyzes all data specific to their areas of responsibility regarding services and cost of services to the consumers of our services. This includes comprehensive data on numbers served, significance/severity of disability, services provided, budget and expenditures and much more. Therefore, the collection of data and analysis is done by several of the Division's sections; Human Resources, Staff Development, Program, Policy, Planning and Evaluation, and Fiscal Services.

The Division served 60,450 eligible individuals in FFY 2011-2012, of which 34,505 (57%) were individuals with significant disabilities and 15,700 with the most significant disabilities. This represents a total of nearly 83% of the people that the Division serves as people with significant or most significant disabilities.

The chart below lists all Counselors, and staff in support of these Counselors. An analysis of these 671 positions was completed, with respect to current vacancies and the projected vacancy rate over the next 5 years. Division experienced a 15.73 % turnover in the Rehabilitation Counselor I positions and a 4.13% turnover rate in Rehabilitation Counselor II positions. The chart immediately below shows an average for the past 3 years of actual data and the expected vacancy rate based on the current data.

Job Title	Total positions	4/1/10-3/3/11 Vacancies	4/1/11-3/31/12 Vacancies	4/1/12-3/31/13 Vacancies	Average 3 Year Rate	Expected Vacancies for 5 years
Rehabilitation Counselor I	199	40	28	30	33	130
Rehabilitation Counselor II	134	8	7	11	7	51

Row	Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
1	Rehabilitation Counselor I	199	3	130
2	Rehabilitation Counselor II	134	0	51
3	Counselor-in-Charge	56	0	15
4	Rehabilitation Administrative Counselor I	3	0	1
5	Rehabilitation Administrative Counselor II	14	0	2
6	Rehabilitation Administrative Counselor III	14	0	2
7	Vocational Evaluator II	43	3	28
8	Human Resources Placement Specialist	65	0	25
9	Human Services Coordinator	29	0	8
10	Rehabilitation Casework Technician	114	0	35

*Please note that the projected vacancy numbers are based on actual hard data collected from 4/2008 – 3/2013. Variables in projection are due to increased reporting capability that is now available through BEACON.

2. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

- a list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
- the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and

- the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Division's Response:

The Division closely works with all of North Carolina's Rehabilitation Counseling university programs of study through advisory board participation, internships, the Recruitment and Retention Committee, and partnerships in conferences and trainings. The chart below includes information obtained from each Rehabilitation Counseling university program, as well as from the Staff Development section's database.

Table 3: Institutions and Type of Program, Students Enrolled in the Program, Total Number of Students Graduating During Prior Year with Certification or Certification for Licensure, and Number Employed by VR & Their Corresponding Personnel Categories:

	Students Enrolled	Total Graduates from prior yr w/ credentials	NC DVRS Hired/ Personnel Category
NC A & T Technical State Univ.- Human Resources Rehab Counseling Master's Program.	109	7	2
East Carolina University-Rehab. Counseling Master's Program	29	0	2
East Carolina University-Vocational Evaluation Master's Program	2	0	2
East Carolina University Substance Abuse Counseling Program	41	27	0
Winston Salem State Univ.- Rehab. Counseling Master's Program	62	16	3
University of NC-Chapel Hill -Rehab. Counseling & Psychology Master's Program	40	14	1
TOTAL	263	64	10

Table 4: Institutions and employees of NC DVRS who are enrolled, sponsored by agency and /or RSA, graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA and graduates from the previous years:

Row	Institutions	Students enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates sponsored by agency and/or RSA	Graduates from the previous year
1	NC Agricultural & Technical State University	2	1	1	0
2	East Carolina University	1	1	1	1
3	Winston-Salem State University	1	1	0	3
4	University of NC at Chapel Hill	0	0	0	0
5	TOTAL	4	3	2	4

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development (updated on an annual basis) and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the Coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

Division's Response:

The Division implemented a paid internship program in January of 2005. This program was coordinated from our Staff Development section with the support of management, Human Resources, and counselors across North Carolina. Due to budget restrictions, this program became an unpaid internship program. This change in the program did have impact in the initial involvement of students, but participation is improving overall. The benefit of hiring interns into vacant positions is that we have a sense of the person's strengths and weaknesses prior to being hired. The additional probationary period that every new employee undergoes does allow the Division better assess a proper job match. If the person is not successful during this time, the person is released from the job during probationary status. This is not viewed the same as a dismissal. It is considered an extension of the hiring process and not disciplinary action. A majority of our interns hired by NC DVRS have been from the two Historically Black Universities in our state; NC Agricultural & Technical State University and Winston-Salem State University.

Division personnel participate in the university Rehabilitation Counseling program advisory boards within the state. The type of personnel representing NC DVRS within these advisory boards varies; however the Division is well represented and our role well respected within these programs. Our partnerships with these institutions are fortified through our staff enrolled in many of these programs, which include the historically black schools. Further, the unit offices are encouraged to participate in

partnering local career fairs at the partnering universities and colleges. Marketing displays and brochures have been provided to every unit office so that marketing materials remain available for the unit offices' activities.

A broader perspective on retention includes a comprehensive, timely and effective onboarding/orientation program that is in progress. The Division recognizes that getting off to the right start can make the difference in retaining an employee. A comprehensive overview of the Division--its mission, staff, organizational structure, processes and relevant information--can ensure a good start. The Staff Development section is working with an advisory board that includes different job classifications throughout the agency to structure an onboarding program that will be effective for all levels of employees. The program will not begin with the first day of employment; it will begin as part of the hiring process and will extend throughout the career of each employee. An onboarding program helps a person feel that the agency is prepared to help new employees gain information necessary for their job at the right time. The intent is not to flood a new employee with so much information that it becomes useless. The program will be presented largely in an on-line tutorial or distance learning format, enabling employees to be at different places within the process at one time.

Personnel Standards

Describe the state agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

1. standards that are consistent with any national or state-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or, in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements (including state personnel requirements) that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services; and
2. to the extent that existing standards are not based on the highest requirements in the state applicable to a particular profession or discipline, the steps the state is currently taking and the steps the State Plans to take in accordance with the written plan to retrain or hire personnel within the designated state unit to meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in the state, including measures to notify designated state unit personnel, institutions of higher education, and other public agencies of these steps and the timelines for taking each step.

Be sure to include the following:

- specific strategies for retraining, recruiting, and hiring personnel;
- the specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the standards;
- procedures for evaluating the designated state unit's progress in hiring or retraining personnel to meet applicable personnel standards within the established time period;
- the identification of initial minimum qualifications that the designated state unit will require of newly hired personnel when the state unit is unable to hire new personnel who meet the established personnel standards;
- the identification of a plan for training newly hired personnel who do not meet the established standards to meet the applicable standards within the time period established for all state unit personnel to meet the established personnel standards.

Division's Response:

While NC DVRS modeled its counselor personnel standard after the CRCC, the Division initiated its own comprehensive standard with more specific listing of degrees that it will accept. Effective October 1, 2008, this standard-related requirement for a Rehabilitation Counselor hire includes:

- Master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling;
- Master's degree in a closely related field such as Counseling, Social Work, Psychology, Special Education, Communication Disorders, Human Services;
- Current certification as a Certified Rehabilitation Counselor or Licensed Professional Counselor;
- Current enrollment in a qualifying master's degree program AND graduation occurs prior to the date of hire.

As of 12/21/09, all individuals in the Rehabilitation Counselor I and Rehabilitation Counselor II roles met the current CSPD mandate. Currently, we have 2 employees who are considered Rehabilitation Counselor Trainees. Employees in trainee status do not function as a Rehabilitation Counselor, but are required to progress toward attaining the necessary requirements outlined in a Memorandum of Agreement within the specified timeframe. If the employee does not meet the specified requirements or they are not progressing at an acceptable rate, the employee will be separated during their probationary status period.

As of March, 2012, the Division had the following number of employees of which all meet the Division's CSPD requirements with the exception of trainees, who are making progress toward an approved Master's degree:

- Rehabilitation Counselor Trainees - 2
- Rehabilitation Counselor I - 199
- Rehabilitation Counselor II - 134
- Counselors-In-Charge- 56

The chart listed below shows the change in the past year in relationship to turnover in the Rehabilitation Counseling positions. The most significant change is noted in the position of Rehabilitation Counselor II. The Division feels this reduction is in relationship to the current budget situation within the state.

Position	2010	2011	Difference
Rehabilitation Counselor I	16%	15.73%	0.36%
Rehabilitation Counselor II	15%	4.13%	11.87%

NC DVRS currently averages around 25-30 qualified applicants for each vacancy, which is primarily attributable to the current economic climate. This means that recruitment for RC I and II's have not been as challenging as in years past. The Division does find it more challenging to find individuals prepared to serve a Deaf and Hard of Hearing caseload, but these vacancies have not been impossible to fill.

Staff Development

Describe the state agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

1. a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated state unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology; and
2. procedures for the acquisition and dissemination to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessionals significant knowledge from research and other sources.

Division's Response:

The Division continues to put forth a concerted effort to train staff in job development and placement. During, 2012 an additional 82 staff participated in the in a comprehensive Dual Customer Approach training initiative. Training sessions were made available to all new hires without wait lists or alternates. Now that everyone across the state has received the training during the initial Dual Customer Approach training, the number of participants is dropping. That participation reflects the number of new hires. This training provides meaningful techniques to assist all employees that work with a VR Unit Office to assist in the process of developing relationships with employers. The strategy has had great success in increasing successful employment outcomes. The premise is that for job development and placement to be successful, the Division must consider the needs of both the consumer and employer. Additional training opportunities occurred for 60 NC DVRS staff during the past year in relation to job development by attending the 2012 Workforce Development Conference.

The Division also places emphasis on vocational assessments. This is reflective in its maintenance of 45 Vocational Evaluators and 3 Vocational Evaluation Specialists. As a result, the Division does not typically utilize contractual services for assessing consumers. We also strive to provide excellent training for those serving in the vocational evaluator positions. Each year, the Staff Development Department supports participating in East Carolina University's Evaluator Summer Institute. However, as of Summer 2012 it was determined that the ECU Vocational Evaluation Program will no longer be in existence. The Human Resources Director, Assistant Human Resources Director and 2 Rehabilitation Specialists (during the medical absence of the Chief of Staff Development), meet with the main instructor of the Summer Institute to develop a program that would provide ongoing education for the current Vocational Evaluators and Vocational Evaluation Specialist. Planning is on-going.

Another professional development program that is available to all VR and IL staff who provide evaluation, Assistive Technology equipment and Assistive Technology services for the consumers they are serving is the NC Assistive Technology Program (NCATP). NCATP has twenty staff serving the state of North Carolina, which includes the Director, Funding Specialist, AT Information and Referral Specialist, Intake Coordinator, 2 Processing Assistants, 4 Speech Language Pathologists(SLP) and 10 Assistive Technology Consultants. The 10 AT Consultants and 4 SLPs provide direct one-on-one services in the AT Centers. Their annual Assistive Technology Expo is regularly attended by Division staff, but was recently canceled 2 years ago due program budget limitations. However, during 2012 the NCATP Expo joined forces with the North Carolina Rehabilitation Association for "*The GreAT Conference*". The resulting conference was well attended and supported by the North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Feedback from attendees was positive regarding the value of the conference and the collaboration between both organizations.

The 2012 North Carolina Rehabilitation Association Conference and NCATP Expo called "*The GreAT Conference*" hosted 374 participants and an additional 30 students participating in poster sessions. North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation and Independent Living program staff represented 196 out of 374 of those attending. Staff benefit from the networking and learning that occurs at this annual conference. Various topics such as ethics for rehabilitation staff, effectively serving specialty populations, and assistive technology solution updates are featured at these training events.

The Division continues the use of the Bulletin Board on its Intranet for the dissemination of information between staff. General information pertaining to conferences, trainings, research, articles, and relevant rehabilitation information is shared there. Different forums also exist on this Bulletin Board for discussion among staff in specific positions; such as for Counselors, Vocational Evaluators, Business Relations Representatives, etc.

The Division sponsored the attendance of 419 staff in conferences this past fiscal year. These conferences included the NC Summer and Winter School for Alcohol and Drug Studies, ECU Summer Vocational Evaluator Institute, Autism Society Conference, Spring Transition Conference, NCAPSE Annual Conference, NC Workforce Development Conference, NC Exceptional Children's Conference and the already mentioned, the collaboration of NCRA and NCATP Expo conference called "*The GreAT Conference*".

Other Individual training requests included: "Everything You Wanted to Know About Drugs, But Were Afraid to Ask"; "Rehabilitation of Racial and Ethnic Minorities with Behavioral Addictions"; "Vocational Evaluators Work Adjustment Association"; "Substance Abuse & Personality Disorders"; "Mental Health Ethics Training"; "Addictions Training"; "NC Business Leadership Network"; "Navigate"; "Dementia Care"; "Co-Occurring Substance Abuse"; "Clinical Supervision Training"; "Former Offenders: Helping You Help Them"; "Depression and Suicide Among Elderly"; "Women of Color and HIV Community Forum"; "Customer Service Works: Addictions and Criminals"; "Helping and Mentoring"; ARC of North Carolina Conference; Autism-Asperger's Syndrome Training; 28th Annual Substance Abuse Services State of the Art; Way 2 Work Summit; NC Division of Career Development and Transition Training, and "Neurobiology and Addition."

"The Five Languages of Appreciation at Work" training was offered to all managers at the Statewide Manager's Meeting in May 2012. Currently, 22 unit offices have participated in the training. Customized trainings included: "Caseload Management"; "Time Management"; "Ethical Dilemmas" (a CRC ethics course); "Team Building," and "Generations at Work with the Team Approach."

Other initiative trainings that continue to occur yearly are: "Dual Customer Approach/Employment Outcomes Professionals"; "Performance Management for Supervisor" and six on-line health and safety trainings.

A major training initiative that will continue through during FFY 2013 is related to computer training and case automation. 2,431 staff statewide trained in the Division's customized version of Libera System 7 electronic case management system. These were live sessions that included Train-the-Trainer sessions, followed by role-based training for users along with a subsequent session for new hires. Other computer training received by individuals included: "Articulate Expert Training"; Office 2010 training; "Get to Know Zebra Zapps: A Webinar Introducing Allen's Interactions Powerful New Authoring Tool"; "Compelling Content"; "Creating Engaging Learning," and the "Digital Government Summit."

Management Training: Ten (10) management trainings were provided to staff during the 2012 Federal Fiscal year. New managers received training in various courses including: "Performance Management Training for Supervisors"; "Equal Employment Opportunity Institute"; "Managing Effective Performance"; "Results-Based Interactions"; "Supporting Leadership Development"; "Leadership Facilitating Change"; "Drug-Free Workplace and Employee Assistance Program," and "Human Resources Skills." Additional attendance for the NC Office of State Personnel's Certified Public Manager's Program was offered for more experienced managers. Additional training was provided at the Annual Statewide Manager's Meeting held in May 2012. Topics included updates from each area or section within VR and the kickoff and presentation of the "Five Languages of Appreciation at Work."

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Describe how the designated state unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals.

Division's Response:

The Division's counselors have the responsibility for determining the individual's preferred language and providing a qualified foreign language interpreter/translator at the earliest possible opportunity, before or after the initial contact with the Division. This translation service is provided at no cost to the person with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). A specific budget, 1292, is designated solely for the provision of this service. The interpreters/translators for all languages must be qualified and trained with demonstrated proficiency in both English and the native language of the client. The Membership Directory of the Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters at <http://www.catiweb.org/> is presently used; however, it is not required that all qualified interpreters/translators be listed in this directory.

All fundamental VR and IL forms (44 currently) are available in Spanish for individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The Division's public website is also in Spanish for the section regarding VR Services to Consumers.

The Division has 14 counselors proficient in American Sign Language with caseloads specifically serving deaf and hard of hearing individuals. There are 10 technicians, 3 Business Relations Representatives, 2 Human Service Coordinators, a program specialist, and 2 Assistive Technology consultants for the deaf who support these counselors and the consumers being served. The Division has a Sign Language Interpreting Budget, 1294, designated solely for sign language interpreting. Approximately 15 interpreting agencies and over 125 independent licensed interpreters contract with the Division and are paid out of this budget. The Division acknowledges communication as a vitally important aspect of the rehabilitation process from start to culmination and remains committed to the provision of services that enable individuals who have specific communication needs to participate in their rehabilitation program. Further, these interpreting and translation services have been identified as essential for quality and success in the delivery of the Division's services.

Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

Describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.

Division's Response:

North Carolina's Secondary Education and Transition Services team consisting of members from NC DVRS, NC Department of Public Instruction representatives, parents and university representatives, developed a state transition plan which includes a goal to accomplish a system of personnel development in support of the IDEIA and the Rehabilitation Act for collaboration to increase transition services to students with disabilities.

The NC Secondary Education and Transition Services planning team began a planning process during SFY 2011 with the purpose to execute the original transition training objective identified in the state plan.

The purpose of the resulting Transition Capacity Building Summit is to replicate the state planning process at the local level which will facilitate training and team building for the local school systems and cooperative VR offices that attend. The training conference will be a combination of lecture sessions and group work activities, centered around building capacity for participating local community level transition teams to implement *transition-focused education*. Each team will be the local school system exceptional children's division transition staff and the cooperative VR office. The planning tool focuses on assisting state teams to review and plan their strategies for increasing capacity within their community. The framework of transition-focused education provides a structure for educational planning that is outcome-oriented and promotes greater involvement and ownership in the decision-making process by key stakeholders, particularly students and their families. The transition capacity building professional development training summit was completed February 24 -25, 2011. The NC Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) was the major sponsor of local grants to the Local Educational Agency (LEAs) to attend the Transition Training Summit allowing 8 LEA teams to attend from across the state lead by the school system Exceptional Children's department. The 8 school systems from around the state received a grant to invite and sponsor local partners to participate in the local transition team. The Summit concentrated on Student-Focused Transition Planning through Interagency Collaboration. The 8 school systems selected by NC DPI were challenged to develop an action plan for improving the provision of transition services systemically in their school system and receive technical assistance as needed from the Exceptional Children's Division (ECD) to enhance and implement the LEAs Continuous Improvement Performance Plans (CIPP). NC DVRS was instrumental in planning and providing presenters for the summit. The State planning team has a continuous goal to include other LEAs in additional summits. At any point that this planning summit is not available, serious consideration will be given to the re-instatement of the single-day Interagency Collaboration Sessions in local VR Units for continued collaboration and exchange of needs and services between NC DVRS and local school systems.

Attachment 4.11(a) Statewide Assessment

Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:

- individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- individuals with disabilities who are minorities;
- individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program; and
- individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system.

Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.

Division's Response:

Introduction

The North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) is one of nineteen divisions and offices within the Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) that provide direct services to the public. DVRS is responsible for assisting individuals who have a physical, mental or learning disability that impedes their ability to prepare for, obtain or maintain employment. North Carolina's VR Program employs approximately 830 staff members in field offices and public schools throughout the state who together provide services that are conveniently located for individuals with disabilities throughout the state.

The 2010 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) is a report of ongoing and continuous assessment efforts conducted in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council and other stakeholder groups. Many of these efforts are spearheaded by or provided in consultation with the Division's Planning and Evaluation section to improve the quality of services and better meet the vocational rehabilitation needs of consumers. This assessment report is representative of our Division's continuous strategic planning process, and the major efforts undertaken in cooperation with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) to ensure that individuals with disabilities are served in the most effective way possible.

The needs assessment is designed to address four assessment domains, as outlined in the Rehabilitation Act. The first three address the rehabilitation needs specific categories of consumers:

- Individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- Individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program;
- Individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system (other than the vocational rehabilitation program), as identified by such individuals and personnel assisting such individuals through the components [of the system].

The last objective is specific to community rehabilitation programs (CRPs):

- An assessment of the need to establish, develop or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.

Beginning October of 2007, North Carolina's VR Program initiated a new needs assessment cycle (CSNA 2010), the report of findings of efforts undertaken during this three year period ending September, 2010. The subsequent assessment cycle (CSNA 2013), which is an assessment conducted once every three

years, will cover the assessment period beginning October, 2010 and conclude September 2013 by which date an updated final assessment report will be completed.

Planning Overview

Guiding Principles

The framework for the needs assessment includes both structural and process components that reflect a set of ideals we considered to be the core values or guiding principles within the scope of this project: systems thinking, participatory dialogue, empirical data, partnerships and collaboration, and strategic planning

Organizational Goals

The guiding principles of this framework are intended to achieve three organizational goals specific to the vocational needs of North Carolinians with disabilities: anticipate and manage change, create a stronger service delivery infrastructure, engage the public and create stakeholder involvement.

Basic Needs Assessment Model

Our 2010 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment report emphasizes major assessment initiatives over a three year period. These activities were conducted in three phases: organizing and planning; needs assessment research; and the identification of strategic issues. The strategic issues identified through the research phase of the assessment, will become a springboard toward the formulation of goals and strategies and the future planning and research for the 2013 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment cycle.

Organizing and Planning

The purpose of this phase was to develop a planning process that would build commitment, engage stakeholders as active partners, use participants' time effectively, and result in planned needs assessment research that could be realistically implemented. This preparation helped participants understand the activities that were undertaken, their responsibilities, how long specific activities would take, and the form in which results were expected. We considered that a carefully planned approach to needs assessment research would be key towards gaining support for the process, staying on track, avoiding frustration, and arriving at a quality result. The planning process was designed by identifying what each process would entail, how long each step would take to accomplish, and who would be responsible for each task. It also involved identifying resource needs before beginning the research to avoid any "squeeze" that might otherwise occur later in the process. The principal resources for the planning effort were the time contributed by participants, but additional monetary resources were needed for travel and to conduct surveys. All of the planned needs assessment research activities were carefully outlined and managed using timelines and work plans, while remaining flexible to accommodate changes as they arose. In organizing and planning the needs assessment, we envisioned two types of participants that would be needed to successfully complete the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment: core support; and stakeholder participants. These two types of participants formed the organizational structure for the planning and implementation of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Core Support

The foundation of core support was our specialized Core Support Team within the Division's Program Policy, Planning and Evaluation Section. Our team included executive staff members to guide the process and specialists to provide technical guidance and analysis. Support staff also assisted in coordinating needs assessment activities. Our core support team was responsible for organizing the needs assessment process and moving it forward. Special committees and subject matter experts were consulted at several phases of the needs assessment to provide consultation and guidance on portions of the work that was

being done. The State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) helped to guide and oversee the needs assessment process.

Stakeholders

Our stakeholders include all persons, agencies and organizations with an investment or stake in the vocational outcomes of individuals with disabilities. This broad definition includes all persons and organizations that benefit from and/or participate in the delivery of vocational rehabilitation services. We considered stakeholder participation integral to the success of the needs assessment and for legitimizing the process by offering strong initial support and providing a range of knowledge.

Needs Assessment Research

Needs assessment research activities were conducted throughout the three year cycle, and organized through what we identified as major theoretical components, or dimensions to assessing needs. We consider the “assessment of need” as undergirded by these four underlying structural pillars:

- Forces of Change;
- Demographics of VR consumers and North Carolinians with Disabilities;
- Vocational Rehabilitation Service Delivery System;
- Strengths and Opportunities;

Identifying Strategic Issues

The identification of strategic issues involved interpreting the vast amount of information that had been gathered during the research phases and determining what we believed to be truly important and actionable. We distinguish strategic issues from “critical” issues in that critical issues are important, whereas strategic issues are important and also forward thinking, and seize on current opportunities. Strategic issues are actionable; they represent fundamental policy choices and critical challenges that must be addressed in order to achieve our vision for North Carolinians with disabilities. The strategic issues we identified are the foundation upon which planning strategies will be developed. The results from this phase of our assessment form the basis for the Conclusions section of this report.

Survey Research Methods

Six stakeholder groups were identified for surveying: Division Staff, Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) Service Providers, General Providers of consumer services, Advocacy groups, Consumers of VR Services, and Workforce Development System Partners. The majority of the groups received a web-based survey. A stratified random sample of Division consumers were surveyed via telephone interview through a contract with the North Carolina State University Center for Urban Affairs and Community Services (CUACS). Providers received a mail survey with a self-addressed postage paid return envelope. All surveys contained a core set of 12 questions which asked respondents to identify the top three needs of people with disabilities related to becoming employed or continuing employment. For each need, respondents were asked to rate the response of the Division for that need, state the major gaps or barriers that the Division faces when fulfilling this need, and what might the Division do to overcome these barriers. Additional questions were asked of each stakeholder group as appropriate.

Forces of Change

Forces of change consider the changes within our Division and broader social and economic changes believed to affect the delivery or outcomes of VR services. State and federal legislation, rapid technological advances, changes in the organization of services for persons with various types of disabilities, and shifts in economic and employment forces are all examples of Forces of Change. These contextual factors are important because they affect, either directly or indirectly, the provision of service to and vocational outcomes of individuals with disabilities.

Major DVRS Initiatives during this Needs Assessment Cycle

During the current needs assessment cycle FFY 2007-2010, DVRS actively concentrated on the following initiatives to improve services, outcomes, and progress on its state plan goals:

- Dual Customer Approach;
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services' Strategic Needs and Assessment Planning (SNAP);
- Recruiting and Retention;
- Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Phase Out;
- North Carolina Assistive Technology Program (NCATP) Expansion;
- Medicaid Buy in Program Established through Medicaid Infrastructure Grant (MIG) efforts;
- Collaborative Training for Improving Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities;
- VR/IL Concurrent Records of Service for Rehabilitation Engineering Services in the Central Region;
- Initiatives Headed by the CRP-DVRS Steering Committee;
- Initiatives tied to funding provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

DVRS Casework Policy Changes October 2007 - September 2010

During the course of time during which this statewide needs assessment was conducted, the Division had made adjustments to its casework policies in response to the previous needs assessment, and ongoing program evaluation and monitoring efforts. The time period covered during this needs assessment cycle began on the heels of impactful changes to the physical restoration services policy in 2006, which further delineated the types of conditions consumers presented requiring physical restoration services that would make them eligible for those services. The number of individuals qualifying on the basis of the revised policies was greatly reduced, in turn causing a significant reduction in the corresponding service expenditure level.

Employment Trends for the State of North Carolina

From July 2000 to July 2009, North Carolina's population increased by 1.3 million or 16.1%, to just over 9.38 million residents. At the start of the current assessment cycle, from 2007 to 2008, North Carolina was the third-fastest growing state in the country. In October 2007, at the beginning of our Assessment Cycle, the unemployment rate in North Carolina was near a historic low, at 4.8%. During that time, there was relatively little concern regarding the potential availability of jobs for individuals with disabilities. Many of the discussion regarding the vocational outcomes of individuals with disabilities focused on the quality of the jobs available, however, month-by-month, the state's unemployment rate began to rise to a peak of 11.2% in February 2010. The unemployment rate has since declined somewhat, to a preliminary estimate of 9.8% for July 2010.

The largest net decrease in average annual employment across North Carolina occurs from calendar year 2008 to 2009, which presented a considerable challenge for our Division during the current assessment cycle. We apportion the loss in jobs from 2008 to 2009 according to industry, and we compare employment by sector across these two periods. Government jobs in North Carolina, at the local, state, and federal level accounted for 685,913 jobs across multiple NAIC sectors or about 18% of the total 2009 workforce. In terms of net average annual employment, there was very little change in the public sector. Almost all of the 221,592 jobs lost were in the private sector.

The greatest portion of the loss in jobs, about 30%, is due to a loss of 66,831 manufacturing jobs. The construction industry showed a loss of 43,710 jobs from the previous year, accounting for about 20% of

the total decrease. The balance is accounted largely by 24,647 jobs lost in retail; 24,157 administrative and waste services jobs; 13,941 wholesale trade; 10,341 transportation and warehousing jobs; 10,209 other service sector jobs, other than in the public sector; 9,668 hotel and restaurant jobs; 9,286 professional and technical services jobs; and 5,728 jobs in banking and the financial sector.

However, the healthcare and social assistance sector increased by 7,882 jobs, and was comprised of 553,974 workers in 2009, or 14.5% of the North Carolina's total workforce. Public sector administration jobs increased by 2,615 jobs and accounted for 238,574 jobs, or 6.2% of the total workforce. Another industrial sector with growth was Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, which increased 3,076 jobs in 2009 to 60,285 workers, making up about 1.6% of the total workforce.

Demographics of North Carolinians with Disabilities

Of an estimated 5.8 million non-institutionalized North Carolinians, ages 16 to 65 (excluding those ages 62 and older receiving Social Security retirement income), about 13.48% were reported as having some type of disability; 7.93% with a disability that limits their ability to work; 3.04% with a sensory disability; 8.24% with a physical disability, and 4.96% with a cognitive disability. The prevalence of a significant sensory disability was 0.80%; the prevalence of a significant physical disability was 3.00%, and the prevalence of a significant cognitive disability was 2.11%.

Among North Carolinians with disabilities, employment status and disability-specific work limitations are strongly related, suggesting that "employment disability" is a good indicator of need for VR services. The exception may be among transition age youth, where disability-specific work limitations appear to be under-reported among persons who have not yet entered the workforce. Gender is associated with some of the difference in employment status, but not as much as age, race/ethnicity, and the degree to which area of residence is urban.

Asians and Latinos with disabilities have higher rates of employment and lower prevalence of disability-specific work limitations than Whites and other minority groups. The reverse is true of African Americans and American Indians. The higher rate of employment and lower rate of work-limiting disability associated with Asians and Latinos may be attributable to nativity. Latinos and Asians both have low nativity compared to other race/ethnicity groups, which suggests that a comparatively smaller proportion of Asians and Latinos with work-limiting disabilities are immigrating to the United States. When controlling for nativity, the rate of disability-specific work-limitations for Latinos with disabilities is similar to that of Whites; and the rate for Asians is closer to that of African Americans and American Indians.

Among individuals with disabilities, employment is only slightly higher in areas that are more urban. However, for the subpopulation with disability-specific work limitations the difference is somewhat more notable. The prevalence of disability becomes increasingly higher as the area becomes more rural.

Among individuals with disabilities, there is notable relationship between age and employment status, and also between age and disability-specific work limitations. Disability-specific work limitations are less often reported for younger persons, and this may be because they have yet to enter the workforce. Overall, employment follows a hill-shaped distribution, where individuals with disabilities first enter the workforce at younger ages, and the percent employed then begins to decline as an increasing percentage of individuals with disabilities begin to exit the workforce after age 35. However, "hill-shaped" relationship between employment and age is not as strong for the subpopulation reporting disability-specific work limitations. This suggests that "employment disability" is a good indicator of need for VR services because lack of employment among persons reporting work-limitations is more specifically tied to disability than age (as compared to those with disabilities who do not report work limitations).

Attachment 4.11(b) Annual Estimates

- Identify the number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services.
- Identify the number of eligible individuals who will receive services provided with funds under:
 - Part B of Title I;
 - Part B of Title VI;
 - each priority category, if under an order of selection.
- Identify the cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

Division's Response:

NC DVRS estimates **62,500** individuals with a disability who have been determined eligible for VR services will be in-service with the VR program during federal fiscal year 2014. This figure is based on a forecast model using data from the current and previous three federal fiscal years. This category includes (a) cases where *purchased* services were provided in accordance with the consumer's individualized plan for employment; (b) cases where *purchased* services were provided toward the development of the consumer's individualized plan for employment (e.g., diagnostic and assessment services provided by a community rehabilitation program); and (c) cases where *non-purchased* services were provided (e.g., vocational counseling and evaluations provided by NC DVRS staff).

Of this population of 62,500 individuals determined eligible for VR services, NC DVRS estimates a subgroup of **32,500** individuals will receive services provided with funds under Part B of Title I.

For federal fiscal year 2014, NC DVRS estimates service expenditures of **\$121,060,363**. This includes administrative costs, counseling and placement, and all purchased services, including supported employment provided under the Title VI-B.

NC DVRS does not expect to implement an order of selection process during FFY 2014. Services will be available for all client service categories.

In FFY 2012, NC DVRS paid for **4,382** individuals to receive supported employment (SE) services at total cost of **\$9,470,056** and an average cost of **\$2,161** per case. For FFY 2014 an estimated **4,500** individuals with most significant disabilities (MSD) will receive supported employment services funded through Title VI Part B supplemental grant (**\$585,707**) and Title I Part B (basic support grant), for a projected total cost estimate of **\$9,724,500**.

Category	Title I or Title VI	Estimated Funds	Estimated Number to be Served	Average Cost of Services
Title I (Except Supported Employment)	Title I	\$111,335,863	58,000	\$1,920
Title VI SE Grant + Title I Supported Employment	Title VI	\$9,724,500	4,500	\$2,161
				—
Totals		\$121,060,363	62,500	\$1,938

Attachment 4.11(c)(1) State Goals and Priorities

The goals and priorities are based on the comprehensive statewide assessment, on requirements related to the performance standards and indicators, and on other information about the state agency. (See section 101(a)(15)(C) of the Act.) This attachment should be updated when there are material changes in the information that require the description to be amended.

- Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a council.
- Identify if the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has such a council, jointly reviewed the goals and priorities and jointly agreed to any revisions.
- Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.
- Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:
 - the most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;
 - the performance of the state on standards and indicators; and
 - other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

The following goals and priorities of the Division are developed in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council, along with input gathered through the comprehensive statewide needs assessment process spanning FFY 2007-10, public input, and internal organizational needs assessment and planning processes for purposes of effectively carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs. In addition, the priorities and goals established support improved performance on standards and indicators.

Priority 1: GOAL 1: Employment Outcomes: Increase quantity and quality of employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with significant/most significant disabilities through a dual customer approach.

Objective 1.1: Develop and maintain quality relationships with businesses in a variety of industries across the state. Objective 1.2: Provide consumers with the services necessary to increase their employment options.

Measures for Goal 1: NC DVRS will achieve or exceed the required federal standards for the following indicators:

1.1 The number of persons achieving employment outcomes will equal or exceed the previous year. Baseline FFY 2010: 5961

1.2 The percentage of all individuals who have achieved an employment outcome after exiting the program having received services will equal or exceed 55.80%. Baseline FFY 2010: 56.55%

1.4 Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or Business Enterprise Program employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the percent who are individuals with significant disabilities will equal or exceed 62.40. Baseline FFY 2010: 77.18%

1.5 The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the program in competitive employment as a ratio to the average hourly earnings for all employed North Carolinians will equal or exceed 0.52. Baseline FFY 2010: 0.50

1.6 Of the individuals who achieve competitive employment, the difference between the percent who reported their own income as the largest single source of economic support at closure compared to the percent at application. The difference must equal or exceed 53.0. Baseline FFY 2010: 62.29

Measures for Goal 1 Objective 1.1: NC DVRS will equal or improve performance when compared to the baseline for the following measurable indicators:

- Number of active business relationship. Baseline: to be established FFY 2012
- Services provided to those businesses. Baseline: to be established FFY 2012
- Industries represented. Baseline: to be established FFY 2012
- Consumers hired and job types. Baseline: to be established FFY 2012

Measures for Goal 1 Objective 1.2: NC DVRS will equal or improve performance when compared to the baseline for the following measurable indicators:

- Consumers responding “a lot” to Consumer Satisfaction Survey question 2(c): “Did VR help you search for a job?” Baseline: FFY 2010 41.45%
- Consumers responding “a lot” to Consumer Satisfaction Survey question 2(d): “Did VR help you decide on job choices?” Baseline: FFY 2010 32.82%

Priority 2: GOAL 2: Access to Services: Increase consumers’ understanding of and access to the Division’s services and programs including their ability to provide feedback.

Objective 2.1: Increase the availability of information about the VR program within the community.

Objective 2.2: Increase access to program services for potential consumers.

Objective 2.3: Increase access to feedback tools for potential, current and former consumers of services.

Measures for Goal 2: NC DVRS will equal or improve performance when compared to the baseline for the following measurable indicators:

- Ratio of individuals who develop a new Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to applicants for services. Baseline FFY 2010: Individuals developing new IPEs: 13,948 Applicants: 25,202 Ratio: 55.34%
- Consumer feedback response rates: Mailed consumer satisfaction survey response rate (adjusted for undeliverable): Baseline: FFY 2010: 15.01%
- Public Input forums held & total attendance. Baseline: to be established FFY 2011

- Individuals providing input through web-based input options. Baseline: to be established FFY 2011
- Number of cases served by the Client Assistance Program regarding the NC DVRS VR program: Baseline SFY 2009-2010: 135

Measures for Goal 2 Objective 2.1: NC DVRS will equal or improve performance when compared to the baseline for the following measurable indicators:

- Public Website traffic. Baseline: To be established FFY 2012
- Number of presentations to various stakeholder groups. Baseline: To be established FFY 2012

Measures for Goal 2 Objective 2.2:

- Number of applicants Baseline FFY 2010: 25,202 Reference: Percent of total closures in FFY 10 with previous closures in past 36 months: 19.05%
- Applicants per referral source category other than self-referred.

Measures for Goal 2 Objective 2.3:

- Number of feedback channels available to consumers FFY 2010: 1) mail-based consumer satisfaction survey; 2) web-based e-mail links for feedback; 3) SRC-VR jointly conducted input sessions; 4) public input sessions for the state plan 5) Client Assistance Program
- Mailed consumer satisfaction survey response rate (adjusted for undeliverable): Baseline: FFY 2010: 15.01%

Priority 3: GOAL 3: Service Quality and Uniformity: NC DVRS shall improve the quality and uniformity of the services it provides. Objective 3.1: Maintain a customer focus in the planning and provision of services.

Objective 3.2: Ensure statewide uniformity of case management and policy implementation.

Measures for Goal 3: NC DVRS will equal or improve performance when compared to the baseline for the following measurable indicators:\

- Percentage of consumers responding "excellent" or "above average" on Consumer Satisfaction Survey Q9: "Overall, how would you rate your experience with NC Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) program?" Baseline: FFY 2010: 67.67%
- Percentage of consumers responding "excellent" or "above average" on Consumer Satisfaction Survey Q3: "How would you rate the response time of services provided by VR staff?" Baseline: FFY 2010: 63.97%

Measures for Goal 3 Objective 3.1:

- Percentage of consumers responding "Yes" to Consumer Satisfaction Survey Q4: "Did your counselor inform you that if you had a concern about services that you could contact the Client Assistance Program (CAP)?" Baseline: FFY 2010: 49.69% (33.05% did not recall)
- Percentage of consumers responding "Yes" on Consumer Satisfaction Survey Q5: "Did your counselor inform you about your right to appeal agency decisions with which you disagree?" Baseline: FFY 2010: 57.54% (24.04% did not recall)
- Percentage of consumers indicating that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" on Consumer Satisfaction Survey Q7: "How satisfied were you with your level of involvement in your rehabilitation program (for example deciding on job goals, selecting available services, choosing providers, etc.)?" Baseline: FFY 2010: 80.55%
- Service Timeliness Measures: referral response; eligibility determination; IPE development; major service initiation
- Casework quality measures as tracked through Quality Development Specialist case reviews

Measures for Goal 3 Objective 3.2:

- Quality and uniformity measures as tracked through Quality Development Specialist case reviews using FFY 2010 baseline data
- Case service expenditure data by region using FFY 2010 baseline data
- Average case length data by consumer satisfaction survey respondent group using FFY 2010 baseline data

Priority 4: GOAL 4: Resources: Sustain efforts necessary to retain, train and recruit qualified staff and provide or develop resources necessary to carry out the Division's goals, priorities, and services for individuals with disabilities and our business customers statewide.

Objective 4.1: Continue to recruit qualified staff with skills critical to the delivery of all service components of the Division.

Objective 4.2: Provide ongoing training to staff in order to maintain a high level of service effectiveness.

Objective 4.3: Increase the retention of highly skilled staff throughout the Division.

Objective 4.4: Identify and develop resources that are critical to the delivery of all service components of the Division.

Measures for Goal 4:

- Division's turnover rate. Baseline: to be established FFY 2012
- Average Division-funded, coordinated, or administered training hours offered per staff annually. Baseline: to be established FFY 2012

•Staff survey results pertaining to training and perceived availability of/access to resources needed to provide services effectively to consumers and business customers. Baseline: to be established FFY 2012

Measures for Goal 4 Objective 4.1: •Number of vacancies during the last FFY. Baseline: To be established FFY 2011

Measures for Goal 4 Objective 4.2: •Number of staff attending a training session in the last FFY broken down by position type. Baseline: To be established FFY 2012

Measures for Goal 4 Objective 4.3: •Number of vacancies, average length of vacancies. Baseline: To be established FFY 2012

Measures for Goal 4 Objective 4.4: •Total value of and number of different sources of third party funding or grants, beyond the basic support grants, applied toward the provision of vocational rehabilitation and related services. Baseline: To be established FFY 2012

Priority 5: GOAL 5: Service Equity: Promote equity in the service delivery and the quality of job outcomes for our consumers.

Objective 5.1: Increase outreach to unserved and underserved populations of individuals with disabilities within the state as identified through the Triennial Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

Objective 5.2: Ensure that all vocational rehabilitation services are available and the decision of the appropriateness of each service for a consumer is made without regard to race, gender, disability type, age or geographic location of the consumer.

Objective 5.3: Continuously improve services to unserved and underserved populations of individuals with disabilities within the state as identified through the Triennial Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

Objective 5.4: Continuously improve the methods and processes by which the employment-related needs of individuals with disabilities within the state are comprehensively assessed.

Measures for Goal 5: NC DVRS will equal or improve performance when compared to the baseline for the following measurable indicators: RSA Standard and Indicator 1.5 (wage ratio) for identified unserved and underserved populations identified in the statewide comprehensive needs assessment. Baseline FFY 2010 data

Measure for Goal 5 Objective 5.1: Applications for the Vocational Rehabilitation program by group. Baseline FFY 2010 data

Measure for Goal 5 Objective 5.2: Results of Question 7 from Consumer Satisfaction Survey for groups identified as unserved or underserved in the statewide comprehensive needs assessment: "How satisfied are you with your level of involvement in your rehabilitation program?" Baseline FFY 2010 data

Measure for Objective 5.3: Results of Question 9 from Consumer Satisfaction Survey for groups identified as unserved or underserved in the statewide comprehensive needs assessment: "Overall, how would you rate your experience with the North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) program?" Baseline FFY 2010 data

Attachment 4.11(c)(3) Order of Selection

- Identify the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services.
- Identify the justification for the order.
- Identify the service and outcome goals.
- Identify the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
- Describe how individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities.

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection.

Attachment 4.11(c)(4) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

Specify the state's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act for the provision of supported employment services.

Title VI, Part B funds are distributed to supported employment programs with the North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (The Division). These community rehabilitation programs provide services to consumers with severe and persistent mental illness, mental retardation, traumatic head injury, autism, cerebral palsy, and other developmental disabilities. In addition, other eligible individuals determined to be most significantly disabled, and who require intensive training and long-term support (extended services) in order to obtain and maintain successful employment outcome are also served. The Division annually serves over 4,000 consumers with the most significant disabilities within the supported employment (SE) program. The goals and priorities for the distribution of funds received under Section 622 of the Act are to promote the expansion of new supported employment programs and to address the unmet and underserved areas of the state as it relates to supported employment services by the expansion of new programs where needed. More specifically, goals for the supported employment program for FFY 2014 include:

Supported Employment Goal 1: Increase the number of individuals with most significant disabilities who receive supported employment services.

Supported Employment Goal 2: Identify and begin implementing practices that can increase the successful closure rate of individuals receiving supported employment services.

Supported Employment Goal 3: Fully implement a performance-based milestone payment system focusing on outcomes versus process to produce quality, meaningful employment outcomes for consumers requiring supported employment services.

Supported Employment Goal 4: Support increased training/qualification requirements for job coaches and their supervisory staff. Collaboratively increase supported employment training to NC DVRS rehabilitation counselors and Community Rehabilitation Program direct service staff.

Supported Employment Goal 5: Continue collaboration with the Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services to optimize coordination of services at the local service level to improve ease of service access for consumers requiring supported employment services.

Attachment 4.11(d) State's Strategies

This attachment should include required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the vocational rehabilitation and the supported employment programs. (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Act and Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)).

Describe the methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

Division's Response:

A. Establishment of Goals and Priorities and How the Strategies and Substrategies Interrelate and Support their Achievement:

Following a thorough analysis of the results of the 2010 Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment, the Division and its SRC, jointly established the prioritized goals below for the period 2012-14:

Priority 1: GOAL 1: Employment Outcomes: Increase quantity and quality of employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with significant/most significant disabilities through a dual customer approach.

Priority 2: GOAL 2: Access to Services: Increase consumers' understanding of and access to the Division's services and programs including their ability to provide feedback.

Priority 3: GOAL 3: Service Quality and Uniformity: NC DVRS shall improve the quality and uniformity of the services it provides.

Priority 4: GOAL 4: Resources: Sustain efforts necessary to retain, train and recruit qualified staff and provide or develop resources necessary to carry out the Division's goals, priorities, and services for individuals with disabilities and our business customers statewide.

Priority 5: GOAL 5: Service Equity: Promote equity in the service delivery and the quality of job outcomes for our consumers.

These goals were also highly influenced by the longstanding overarching principles reinforced within the Rehabilitation Act:

- Expand and improve services to all individuals with disabilities;
- Ensure that the Division collaborates and assists other entities/agencies within the statewide workforce development system in order to respond to and work with individuals with disabilities;
- Assure the broadest use of assistive technology services/devices in all phases of rehabilitation;
- Address identified barriers relative to equitable access and participation by individuals with disabilities in all state vocational rehabilitation programs/services;
- Improve the Division's performance on the evaluation standards and performance indicators established pursuant to section 106 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended.

B. Strategies and Substrategy Development and Management of Activities to Support Their Execution:

Following the development of the goals above, workgroups were established to develop strategies and substrategies that are to serve guide coordinated activities over this time period to help the Division to make substantial measurable progress toward the five prioritized goals. The separate dedicated workgroups are charged with developing and maintaining an action plan with timelines, to help coordinate and monitor the progress of the activities related to the strategies and substrategies.

C. Strategies and Substrategies:

The following strategies and substrategies are guiding the Division's efforts and activities related to its achievement of its goals and priorities, supporting its innovation and expansion activities, and facilitating access to the services of the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs during the time period FFY 2012-2014:

PRIORITY 1 GOAL 1: Employment Outcomes: Increase quantity and quality of employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with significant/most significant disabilities through a dual customer approach.

Objective 1.1: Develop and maintain quality relationships with businesses in a variety of industries across the state. Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 1 Objective 1.1:

Strategy 1.1a: Leverage existing business relationships.

Substrategy 1.1a1: Examine current business activities to ascertain what is being gained by the Division from these relationships.

Substrategy 1.1a2: Emphasize staff engagement in follow up activities with current business relationships.

Strategy 1.1b: Identify opportunities to create new business relationships across various employment fields and geographic areas.

Substrategy 1.1b1: Ensure coordination of Division staff across geographic areas.

Substrategy 1.1b2: Identify and partner with consumers who are willing to relocate elsewhere in the state for a job opportunity.

Substrategy 1.1b3: Establish the Western Regional Employment Specialist position.

Substrategy 1.1b4: Fill the Statewide Employment Specialist position.

Substrategy 1.1b5: Create an employer portal through the BEAM system that allows them to Post job openings as well as view profiles of consumers who are looking for employment.

Substrategy 1.1b6: Revise and fully develop the employer page of the public website.

Strategy 1.1c: Determine the effectiveness of the services NC DVRS provides to its current business customers.

Substrategy 1.1c1: Review the design and implementation of the Business Services survey.

Substrategy 1.1c2: Establish systematic tracking of follow up services.

Strategy 1.1d: Continue to assist staff in developing and maintaining skills in the area of business relationship building.

Strategy 1.1e: Develop and implement a structured system to track business activities at the statewide and unit office levels.

Objective 1.2: Provide consumers with the services necessary to increase their employment options.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 1 Objective 1.2:

Strategy 1.2a: Assist consumers in making informed decisions regarding employment fields that have demand for workers, including the option for self-employment.

Substrategy 1.2a1: Training in and provision of information to staff and consumers on local and state labor markets, including career fields with high demand for workers.

Substrategy 1.2a2: Increased collaboration with the Employment Security Commission and its local JobLink Career Centers.

Substrategy 1.2a3: Systematically measure consumer skills, interests and abilities utilizing a variety of methods, based on the consumers' needs.

Substrategy 1.2a4: Reallocate resources to enable continued operation, support and activities of statewide small business consultant.

Strategy 1.2b: Increase and improve training opportunities available to consumers.

Substrategy 1.2b1: Expand job search skills training to more consumers, including those pursuing a Post- secondary degree.

Substrategy 1.2b2: Target cases who are in their last semester of school for on-the-job training and internships.

Substrategy 1.2b3: Emphasize consistent use of transitioning planning for post-secondary students statewide.

Substrategy 1.2b4: Partner and expand collaboration with career development offices at colleges and universities statewide.

Substrategy 1.2b5: Make On-the-Job Training experiences available to a greater number of consumers.

Substrategy 1.2b6: Target internship opportunities with employers that NC DVRS has relationships with.

Strategy 1.2c: Increase and improve supported employment and work adjustment training opportunities for consumers.

Substrategy 1.2c1: Work with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), TACE, and other resources to develop training opportunities to increase the quality of services available statewide.

Substrategy 1.2c2: Work with NC MH/DD/SAS employment specialist to help optimize the amount of funding made available and used for long term follow along services required by individuals receiving supported employment services.

Substrategy 1.2c3: Ensure that rehabilitation technology is readily available to CRPs to meet the identified needs of consumers.

Strategy 1.2d: Increase and improve transportation options available to consumers.

Substrategy 1.2d1: Increase NC DVRS' involvement with the NC DOT state and regional planning processes pertaining to the transportation of people with disabilities.

Substrategy 1.2d2: Through collaboration with NC DOT, local and regional entities to make employment related transportation needs of people with disabilities known.

Substrategy 1.2d3: Continued education of counselors on transportation options available to consumers including adaptive vehicle modifications.

Strategy 1.2e: Identify best practices for training and employment for targeted populations as identified in the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Substrategy 1.2e1: Continue to work with TACE centers to identify and implement best practices.

Substrategy 1.2e2: Continue collaborations with programs focusing employment initiatives for youth transitioning from school to work.

Substrategy 1.2e3: Continue to identify and apply best practices that will increase employment success of individuals with disabilities transitioning from a corrections environment or have experienced difficulties obtaining employment because of previous convictions.

Substrategy 1.2e4: Through ongoing educational and process streamlining efforts, increase the utilization of appropriate rehabilitation technologies to enable individuals with significant/most significant disabilities increased chances of employment success.

PRIORITY 2: GOAL 2: Access to Services: Increase consumers' understanding of and access to the Division's services and programs including their ability to provide feedback.

Objective 2.1: Increase the availability of information about the VR program within the community.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 2 Objective 2.1:

Strategy 2.1a: Increase the amount and quality of information available through the Division's public website, including the approved State Plan and casework policies.

Strategy 2.1b: Enhance the availability and accessibility of marketing materials including the availability of alternate formats that clearly explain VR services.

Substrategy 2.1b1: As resources allow, develop accessible video presentation(s) presenting information about the VR program and services in an interesting, clear and concise manner.

Strategy 2.1c: Educate current referral sources about the VR program and its services and explore ways to expand referral sources.

Strategy 2.1d: Increase information about the Division and its services through systematic outreach to groups such as employers, consumers, advocates, school systems, and workforce development partners.

Strategy 2.1e: Increase the public's knowledge of the VR program through systematically inviting outside partners and referral sources to link to the Division's public website.

Objective 2.2: Increase access to program services for potential consumers.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 2 Objective 2.2:

Strategy 2.2a: Explore the need for customer friendly practices such as expanded office hours and alternate locations for appointments.

Strategy 2.2b: Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Division's current intake processes.

Objective 2.3: Increase access to feedback tools for potential, current and former consumers of services.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 2 Objective 2.3:

Strategy 2.3a: Expand the methods by which the consumer satisfaction survey is administered in order to allow consumers to respond via a medium that is accessible to them and encourages their participation.

Strategy 2.3b: Solicit feedback from consumers, advocates and other stakeholder groups on the employment-related needs of individuals with disabilities through the triennial statewide comprehensive needs assessment.

Strategy 2.3c: Partner with the State Rehabilitation Council to solicit consumer and stakeholder feedback through regularly scheduled public forums and web-based venues.

PRIORITY 3 GOAL 3: Service Quality and Uniformity: NC DVRS shall improve the quality and uniformity of the services it provides.

Objective 3.1: Maintain a customer focus in the planning and provision of services. Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 3 Objective 3.1:

Strategy 3.1a: Staff demonstrates the five key customer satisfaction attributes as defined by NC DHHS: job knowledge, willingness to help others, responsiveness, being respectful of others, and effective communication.

Strategy 3.1b: Consumers are involved in the planning and execution of their rehabilitation program to the extent that they are willing and able to participate.

Strategy 3.1c: Consumers are consistently and accurately informed of their rights as consumers.

Strategy 3.1d: Increase training initiatives in the area of ethics.

Objective 3.2: Ensure statewide uniformity of case management and policy implementation.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 3 Objective 3.2:

Strategy 3.2a: Develop a quality assurance plan reflective of the recent centralization of quality development activities.

PRIORITY 4 GOAL 4: Resources: Sustain efforts necessary to retain, train and recruit qualified staff and provide or develop resources necessary to carry out the Division's goals, priorities, and services for individuals with disabilities and our business customers statewide.

Objective 4.1: Continue to recruit qualified staff with skills critical to the delivery of all service components of the Division.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 4 Objective 4.1:

Strategy 4.1a: Increase targeted recruiting efforts in areas of identified staffing needs.

Substrategy 4.1a1: Increase targeted recruiting efforts as required to maintain deaf counselor staffing needs to effectively serve individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing statewide.

Substrategy 4.1a2: Increase recruiting and other efforts to increase the availability of qualified vocational evaluators necessary to serve the Division's consumers statewide.

Substrategy 4.1a3: Reallocate a position to allow small business consultant to continue the consultation to Rehabilitation Counselors.

Substrategy 4.1a4: Further explore and develop a plan to re-institute a physical disabilities specialist position, should the funding environment allow, or explore other options of providing staff the desired level of guidance and analysis in areas of new and developing methods of providing consumers effective and fiscally responsible physical restoration services.

Strategy 4.1b: Effectively utilize information obtained from the system for tracking applicants who decline employment with the Division as to reason.

Objective 4.2: Provide ongoing training to staff in order to maintain a high level of service effectiveness.

Strategies and Sub strategies in support of Goal 4 Objective 4.2:

Strategy 4.2a: Develop and maintain a more systematic professional development system for new and experienced staff featuring areas of focus as identified through collected evidence.

Substrategy 4.2a1: Continue to develop and regularly offer training to staff on how to more effectively serve specific disability populations.

Substrategy 4.2a2: Offer online training options to staff that are available on-demand.

Substrategy 4.2a3: Routinely conduct gap analyses of the skill sets of recent graduate hires, to determine what additional skills are needed to increase effectiveness.

Substrategy 4.2a4: Continue to offer caseload management training.

Substrategy 4.2a5: Offer continuous support and training to Division management.

Substrategy 4.2a6: Conduct the training needs assessment on a biennial basis in order to maintain the most current information on staff development needs.

Objective 4.3: Increase the retention of highly skilled staff throughout the Division.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 4 Objective 4.3:

Strategy 4.3a: Explore alternative work arrangements/options that offer more flexibility to staff in their ability to serve consumers safely and effectively. Strategy 4.3b: Develop an action plan to accommodate the large number of anticipated staff retirements within the Division.

Objective 4.4: Identify and develop resources that are critical to the delivery of all service components of the Division.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 4 Objective 4.4:

Strategy 4.4a: Effectively coordinate and leverage existing resources.

Substrategy 4.4a1: Continue to utilize staff in a flexible manner that meets local office needs while exploring new staffing patterns that effectively meet business requirements.

Substrategy 4.4a2: Review and update staff job descriptions.

Strategy 4.4b: Expand resources through partnering with entities that can positively impact the quality and effectiveness of services.

Strategy 4.4c: Pursue additional funding as needed through grant opportunities that align with the Division's established goals and priorities.

Strategy 4.4d: Conduct a critical analysis of the Division's leased office spaces to determine if they effectively meet the needs of both staff and consumers.

PRIORITY 5 GOAL 5: Service Equity: Promote equity in the service delivery and the quality of job outcomes for our consumers.

Objective 5.1: Increase outreach to unserved and underserved populations of individuals with disabilities within the state as identified through the Triennial Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 5 Objective 5.1:

Strategy 5.1a: Based on the results of the most recently completed Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, the Division will focus on the following identified unserved and underserved populations of people with disabilities: women, older workers, those living in rural areas, individuals with physical disabilities, Native American Indians, and individuals with mental illness.

Strategy 5.1b: The Division will strategically provide information about its services within the working and residential communities with the largest concentrations of unserved and underserved populations within the state.

Strategy 5.1c: Division will work to establish a collaborative working relationship with culturally-oriented groups, including any economic organizations or chambers of commerce to increase successful employment of minorities and other unserved and underserved populations within North Carolina.

Strategy 5.1d: Better meet the communication needs of consumers with Limited English Proficiency.

Objective 5.2: Ensure that all vocational rehabilitation services are available and the decision of the appropriateness of each service for a consumer is made without regard to race, gender, disability type, age or geographic location of the consumer.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 5 Objective 5.2:

Strategy 5.2a: Increase efforts to ensure that information about all vocational rehabilitation services are made available to every consumer so that they may be an active participant in the development of their plan for services.

Strategy 5.2b: Continually improve in the uniformity of policy implementation throughout the state.

Objective 5.3: Continuously improve services to unserved and underserved populations of individuals with disabilities within the state as identified through the Triennial Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 5 Objective 5.3:

Strategy 5.3a: Based on the results of the most recently completed Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, the Division will focus on the following identified unserved and underserved populations of people with disabilities: women, older workers, those living in rural areas, individuals with physical disabilities, Native American Indians, and individuals with mental illness.

Strategy 5.3b: Provide training for counselors regarding effective practices in serving individuals identified as unserved or underserved.

Strategy 5.3c: Increase the Division's collaboration with organizations and agencies that serve and advocate for the identified unserved or underserved populations.

Substrategy 5.3c1: Establish a pilot program using peers as a means of providing support to consumers in areas where regular supports are required to increase successful employment outcomes.

Objective 5.4: Continuously improve the methods and processes by which the employment-related needs of individuals with disabilities within the state are comprehensively assessed.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 5 Objective 5.4:

Strategy 5.4a: Implement continuous data collection and analysis of variables that affect the successful provision of services for all disability groups. Strategy 5.4b: Plan and implement the Triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment for 2013.

Requirement:

Identify how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process; and describe how assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis.

Division's Response

Assistive Technology services and devices are provided to eligible individuals statewide who require them. Rehabilitation technology and assistive technology services are sponsored and provided to the degree necessary to complete the rehabilitation program. Included are services and devices which can

supplement and enhance an individual's functions such as adapted computer access, augmentative communication, specialized seating and mobility, vehicle modifications, and services which can have an impact on the environment, such as accessibility, job re-design, work site modification and residence modification. Application of the available engineering and assistive technology services and technologies is important when making determinations of eligibility particularly for individuals with significant and most significant disabilities. Rehabilitation engineering evaluations and services are not subject to an individual's financial eligibility; however, devices, equipment and modifications recommended by the engineer are subject to financial eligibility. Applicants during the assessment phase, and consumers determined to be eligible for services, who are in need of and can benefit from rehabilitation engineering services, devices and assistive technology services can be referred to providers of these services, and these services can assist to assist with assessment processes. Presently within the state, these services are made available statewide through the Division's 18 Rehabilitation Engineers in addition to 14 Assistive Technology Consultants, a Funding Specialist, and a Consumer AT Resource/Information Specialist, Program Director, Vehicle Modification Engineer, and Program Specialist for Rehabilitation Technology, all of which comprise the Division's NC Rehabilitation Technology Program. Additional assistive technology services are available through outside Assistive Technology Suppliers and Providers.

The Division is fortunate to have the North Carolina Assistive Technology Program as a vital program component. The program readily expands access and services to individuals served within the VR program, and supports the Division mission of increasing independence for clients in the home, post-secondary school and work setting. In addition, this affords clients of the Division with fast access to the programs array of services which includes: technical expertise in selecting the most appropriate device; hands-on demonstration & try-out of low tech & high tech devices for people with disabilities; information on a variety of technology options; funding resource information and strategies; short-term loan of equipment to consumers, families and professionals who serve them; training to consumers, families and professionals; technical assistance to local organizations, schools, and programs to expand assistive technology local service delivery capacity; awareness & outreach activities to inform the public about equipment & devices people with disabilities can use for greater independence.

Requirement:

Identify what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities; and what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

Division's Response:

The Division employs several strategies to increase outreach activities to various minority groups with the goal of also reaching those individuals with the most significant disabilities. The major thrust of activities is to go where the minority individuals and groups are contrasted with expecting them to come to Vocational Rehabilitation or to know how to access services without assistance. Management and staff on the local, regional, and state levels continue to identify minority or ethnic groups in their community along with identifying group leaders, common meeting places, preferred ways for accessing information, and neighborhood/community resources that can be used and developed to bring rehabilitation services to more minority individuals with the most significant disabilities.

As there are numerous diverse cultures throughout North Carolina, staff are encouraged to concentrate on the groups in their particular area. The specific groups of considerable interest include: North Carolina Native Americans, Hispanic/Latino populations, African and Asian populations. The Division has created a staff position that is dedicated to developing and furthering initiatives for outreach to Hispanic/Latino

populations. This individual routinely travels to the communities where there are high concentrations of the targeted populations and provides marketing information to their meetings and carnivals. The Division also has active program specialists who provide outreach to advocacy organizations serving individuals in the following areas: Mental Illness and Substance abuse, Disabled Veterans, Developmental Disabilities, Traumatic Brain Injuries, and Deaf/Communication Disorders.

Specific Objectives and Strategies Pertaining to these activities are included within the State Plan Goals effective FFY 2012-2014:

Objective 5.1: Increase outreach to unserved and underserved populations of individuals with disabilities within the state as identified through the Triennial Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Objective 5.1:

Strategy 5.1a: Based on the results of the most recently completed Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, the Division will focus on the following identified unserved and underserved populations of people with disabilities: women, older workers, those living in rural areas, individuals with physical disabilities, Native American Indians, and individuals with mental illness.

Strategy 5.1b: The Division will strategically provide information about its services within the working and residential communities with the largest concentrations of unserved and underserved populations within the state.

Strategy 5.1c: Division will work to establish a collaborative working relationship with culturally-oriented groups, including any economic organizations or chambers of commerce to increase successful employment of minorities and other unserved and underserved populations within North Carolina.

Strategy 5.1d: Better meet the communication needs of consumers with Limited English Proficiency.

Requirement:

If applicable, identify plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the state.

Division's Response:

The Division continues to utilize two advisory workgroups or committees comprised of supported employment, other community rehabilitation program providers along with Division staff as an effective method to identify and update the needs, goals, and priorities as they pertain to community rehabilitation programs. This group annually establishes goals and makes recommendations to the NC DVRS Director regarding the directions in which the community rehabilitation programs should continue to develop and grow. Another venue that has effectively promoted healthy dialog between the community rehabilitation programs and the Division is the regional CRP summit. Typically annually or semi-annually, as funding permits, regional summits are held where training and discussion of topics of mutual interest to both the CRP community and the Division.

Community rehabilitation programs are evaluated annually by the Division's local, regional, and state management in order to determine the appropriate level of service outcomes for purchase for the next funding cycle. The decision is based primarily upon need of consumers and availability of financial resources. The programs are also evaluated annually by the Division's local, regional, and state management relative to program capital and staffing needs for new and innovative programs. Priorities are developed and many of these needs are met through the Establishment Authority (the authority which makes funds available for the establishment of community rehabilitation programs) contingent upon the Division having funds available to do so.

The need for new community rehabilitation programs is also assessed continually, with special emphasis as part of the comprehensive statewide needs assessment process. New community rehabilitation programs are created, at least in part, to assist the Division in meeting identified needs and are typically generated through local and sometimes legislative initiatives. In these cases, the Division can help expand and improve the programs through establishment projects as funds permit.

One important activity the Division is currently working on which will launch during FFY 2013 is migrating from older legacy systems to a new electronic case management system which will require a lot of effort on behalf of the Division's fiscal and program staff, community rehabilitation program representatives, and developers. The Division is looking to make the process of receiving documentation and invoicing for services as paperless as possible.

Requirement:

Describe strategies to improve the performance of the state with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators.

Division's Response:

At this time, the Division has met all primary and secondary indicators with the exception of Indicator 1.5 the ratio of the hourly wages of those successfully exiting the NC DVRS program to the NC average hourly wage for all employed individuals.

The Division realizes that in order to perform better on this indicator, it must help consumers to prepare higher paying positions, typically obtained through increased education, specifically through more individuals successfully completing their post-secondary degrees, then following through with jobs that match their employment potential. It is currently looking for ways to adjust its programs, services, and supports to accomplish this in a fiscally-responsible manner.

Further, the Division's commitment to this issue is reflected in the elevated standing of importance that obtaining quality jobs for its consumers has and has made pursuit of this goal/priority 1: Employment Outcomes: Increase quantity and quality of employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with significant/most significant disabilities through a dual customer approach. Beyond increasing consumers' participation in career-oriented post-secondary education/training, some of the other strategies that the Division has established under this goal are to develop and build quality relationships with businesses that offer strong salaries and benefits and to continue offering the internship services, which, compared to an OJT experience, are geared more toward individuals who have completed their specialized training and need work experience to get their careers established. This service has been very well received by staff and consumers and we expect to continue the service.

Another strategy that the Division is employing to increase the earning potential of individuals who have entrepreneurial skills is through the support the Division has made available through a dedicated Small Business Specialist on staff who helps support staff and consumers in their assessment of this option as a fit and when it is mutually determined as such, coordination of local resources and ongoing supports for the consumer pursuing this option.

In December, 2012, the Division applied for and was awarded a grant opportunity to participate in a Learning Collaborative Research Grant that is being conducted and coordinated by the Institute for Community Inclusion, Inc. out of University of Massachusetts-Boston and is NIDRR-funded. The Division submitted a proposal to focus on strategies that can be employed to increase the average hourly

wage in two offices within the Western region with different economic climates and resources. Asheville, which is the larger economic environment, will employ different strategies and approaches to the Forest City office, which is largely manufacturing-based and rural. The project will conclude February, 2014 and toward the end of the project successful strategies will be reviewed to determine which may have application to other economic areas served by the Division. The information is shared with other VR programs through regular collaborative sessions.

Requirement:

Describe strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

Division's Response:

NC DVRS has relatively strong ties with other components of the statewide workforce investment system. The partnerships and linkages that were established prior to the provisions of the Rehabilitation Act amendments of 1998 have served as a stable and effective foundation for effective service delivery. Cooperative agreements or memorandum of agreements have been established with all local area workforce boards. The agreements provide for the following strategies:

- Provision of inter-component staff training and technical assistance with regard to:
 - (a) the availability and benefits of, and information on eligibility standards for vocational rehabilitation services; and
 - (b) the promotion of equal, effective, and meaningful participation by individuals with disabilities receiving workforce development system services in all of the states JobLink Career Centers in the state through the promotion of accessibility; the use of non-discriminatory policies and procedures; the provision of reasonable accommodations; auxiliary aids and services, and rehabilitation technology for persons with disabilities.
- Identification of service delivery strategies by the Division within the JobLink Career Centers and other components of the workforce development system.
- Development and implementation of information systems that link all components of the statewide workforce development system; that link the components to other electronic networks including non-visual electronic networks; and that relate to such subjects as employment statistics and information on job vacancies, career planning, and workforce development activities.
- Further development and use of customer service features such as common intake and referral procedures when feasible, customer databases, resource information, and human services hotlines.
- Establishment of cooperative efforts with employers to facilitate job placement and carry out any other activities that Vocational Rehabilitation and the employers determine to be appropriate.
- Identification of staff roles, responsibilities, and available resources, along with specification of the financial responsibility of each component of the statewide workforce development system with regards to paying for certain services (consistent with state law and federal requirements).

The rehabilitation needs of individuals who are served through components of the statewide workforce development system other than through the public vocational rehabilitation program will be updated and reassessed through the methodology outlined in Attachment 4.11(a) of the State Plan. One of the ongoing goals for both the vocational rehabilitation and JobLink system is to continue to refine the processes and procedures for JobLink staff to better determine which consumers with disabilities utilizing the centers should be referred to NC DVRS rather than being served through the JobLink. First it is necessary to determine which consumers served by the JobLink system have a disability. Strategies to improve this

will be further explored via mutual collaboration between the Division and JobLink Career Centers to establish training for its staff.

The Division enthusiastically participated in the development of JobLink Career Centers and continues to be an active partner throughout North Carolina to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access core workforce services. Vocational Rehabilitation staff are represented on the state level as well as on local boards. The Division remains an active partner with the workforce development system and supports the JobLinks concept to provide more universal access to placement and training services; to integrate programs by offering a common core of information and services; and by offering consumers more choices regarding where and how they get services. Through local agreements, direct service delivery staff within the Division have gained more access to comprehensive Division of Employment Security data, which enables faster service delivery and cross-agency collaboration. Nearly all NC DVRS offices have obtained access to these databases to date.

In every community where there are JobLink Career Centers, local Vocational Rehabilitation offices provide counseling staff, vocational evaluators, human resource placement specialists and other staff as appropriate to meet the needs of those individuals who enter a JobLink Career Center and require the specialized services offered by Vocational Rehabilitation. Specific arrangements and staffing patterns by Vocational Rehabilitation staff vary from site to site depending on local needs and agreements. Enhanced working relationships with key partners of the workforce development system such as Social Services, NC Division of Employment Security, NC Community College System, and other local partnerships allow all the agencies to better meet the needs of the individual.

The number of individuals served or identified through components of the workforce development system is increasing. Local Division management represents Vocational Rehabilitation on the local workforce development boards while staff also actively participate in planning, development, and service delivery with both individual component agencies or within the JobLink Career Centers already established.

State Level meetings with identified partners of the workforce development system continue to promote effective collaboration and equal access to services by individuals with disabilities.

Requirement:

Describe how the agency's strategies will be used to:

- **achieve goals and priorities identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1);**
- **support innovation and expansion activities; and**
- **overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the state Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the state Supported Employment Services Program.**

Division's Response:

The following strategies below will be employed in the Division's efforts and activities related to the goals and priorities effective FFY 2012-2014, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the NC DVRS service program and its supported employment services program:

PRIORITY 1 GOAL 1: Employment Outcomes: Increase quantity and quality of employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with significant/most significant disabilities through a dual customer approach.

Objective 1.1: Develop and maintain quality relationships with businesses in a variety of industries across the state. Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 1 Objective 1.1:

Strategy 1.1a: Leverage existing business relationships.

Substrategy 1.1a1: Examine current business activities to ascertain what is being gained by the Division from these relationships.

Substrategy 1.1a2: Emphasize staff engagement in follow up activities with current business relationships.

Strategy 1.1b: Identify opportunities to create new business relationships across various employment fields and geographic areas.

Substrategy 1.1b1: Ensure coordination of Division staff across geographic areas.

Substrategy 1.1b2: Identify and partner with consumers who are willing to relocate elsewhere in the state for a job opportunity.

Substrategy 1.1b3: Establish the Western Regional Employment Specialist position.

Substrategy 1.1b4: Fill the Statewide Employment Specialist position.

Substrategy 1.1b5: Create an employer portal through the BEAM system that allows them to Post job openings as well as view profiles of consumers who are looking for employment.

Substrategy 1.1b6: Revise and fully develop the employer page of the public website.

Strategy 1.1c: Determine the effectiveness of the services NC DVRS provides to its current business customers.

Substrategy 1.1c1: Review the design and implementation of the Business Services survey.

Substrategy 1.1c2: Establish systematic tracking of follow up services.

Strategy 1.1d: Continue to assist staff in developing and maintaining skills in the area of business relationship building.

Strategy 1.1e: Develop and implement a structured system to track business activities at the statewide and unit office levels.

Objective 1.2: Provide consumers with the services necessary to increase their employment options.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 1 Objective 1.2:

Strategy 1.2a: Assist consumers in making informed decisions regarding employment fields that have demand for workers, including the option for self-employment.

Substrategy 1.2a1: Training in and provision of information to staff and consumers on local and state labor markets, including career fields with high demand for workers.

Substrategy 1.2a2: Increased collaboration with the Employment Security Commission and its local JobLink Career Centers.

Substrategy 1.2a3: Systematically measure consumer skills, interests and abilities utilizing a variety of methods, based on the consumers' needs.

Substrategy 1.2a4: Reallocate resources to enable continued operation, support and activities of statewide small business consultant.

Strategy 1.2b: Increase and improve training opportunities available to consumers.

Substrategy 1.2b1: Expand job search skills training to more consumers, including those pursuing a

Post- secondary degree.

Substrategy 1.2b2: Target cases who are in their last semester of school for on-the-job training and internships.

Substrategy 1.2b3: Emphasize consistent use of transitioning planning for post-secondary students statewide.

Substrategy 1.2b4: Partner and expand collaboration with career development offices at colleges and universities statewide.

Substrategy 1.2b5: Make On-the-Job Training experiences available to a greater number of consumers.

Substrategy 1.2b6: Target internship opportunities with employers that NC DVRS has relationships with.

Strategy 1.2c: Increase and improve supported employment and work adjustment training opportunities for consumers.

Substrategy 1.2c1: Work with Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs), TACE, and other resources to develop training opportunities to increase the quality of services available statewide.

Substrategy 1.2c2: Work with NC MH/DD/SAS employment specialist to help optimize the amount of funding made available and used for long term follow along services required by individuals receiving supported employment services.

Substrategy 1.2c3: Ensure that rehabilitation technology is readily available to CRPs to meet the identified needs of consumers.

Strategy 1.2d: Increase and improve transportation options available to consumers.

Substrategy 1.2d1: Increase NC DVRS' involvement with the NC DOT state and regional planning processes pertaining to the transportation of people with disabilities.

Substrategy 1.2d2: Through collaboration with NC DOT, local and regional entities to make employment related transportation needs of people with disabilities known.

Substrategy 1.2d3: Continued education of counselors on transportation options available to consumers including adaptive vehicle modifications.

Strategy 1.2e: Identify best practices for training and employment for targeted populations as identified in the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment.

Substrategy 1.2e1: Continue to work with TACE centers to identify and implement best practices.

Substrategy 1.2e2: Continue collaborations with programs focusing employment initiatives for youth transitioning from school to work.

Substrategy 1.2e3: Continue to identify and apply best practices that will increase employment success of individuals with disabilities transitioning from a corrections environment or have experienced difficulties obtaining employment because of previous convictions.

Substrategy 1.2e4: Through ongoing educational and process streamlining efforts, increase the utilization of appropriate rehabilitation technologies to enable individuals with significant/most significant disabilities increased chances of employment success.

PRIORITY 2: GOAL 2: Access to Services: Increase consumers' understanding of and access to the Division's services and programs including their ability to provide feedback.

Objective 2.1: Increase the availability of information about the VR program within the community.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 2 Objective 2.1:

Strategy 2.1a: Increase the amount and quality of information available through the Division's public website, including the approved State Plan and casework policies.

Strategy 2.1b: Enhance the availability and accessibility of marketing materials including the availability of alternate formats that clearly explain VR services.

Substrategy 2.1b1: As resources allow, develop accessible video presentation(s) presenting information about the VR program and services in an interesting, clear and concise manner.

Strategy 2.1c: Educate current referral sources about the VR program and its services and explore ways to expand referral sources.

Strategy 2.1d: Increase information about the Division and its services through systematic outreach to groups such as employers, consumers, advocates, school systems, and workforce development partners.

Strategy 2.1e: Increase the public's knowledge of the VR program through systematically inviting outside partners and referral sources to link to the Division's public website.

Objective 2.2: Increase access to program services for potential consumers.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 2 Objective 2.2:

Strategy 2.2a: Explore the need for customer friendly practices such as expanded office hours and alternate locations for appointments.

Strategy 2.2b: Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Division's current intake processes.

Objective 2.3: Increase access to feedback tools for potential, current and former consumers of services.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 2 Objective 2.3:

Strategy 2.3a: Expand the methods by which the consumer satisfaction survey is administered in order to allow consumers to respond via a medium that is accessible to them and encourages their participation.

Strategy 2.3b: Solicit feedback from consumers, advocates and other stakeholder groups on the employment-related needs of individuals with disabilities through the triennial statewide comprehensive needs assessment.

Strategy 2.3c: Partner with the State Rehabilitation Council to solicit consumer and stakeholder feedback through regularly scheduled public forums and web-based venues.

PRIORITY 3 GOAL 3: Service Quality and Uniformity: NC DVRS shall improve the quality and uniformity of the services it provides.

Objective 3.1: Maintain a customer focus in the planning and provision of services. Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 3 Objective 3.1:

Strategy 3.1a: Staff demonstrates the five key customer satisfaction attributes as defined by NC DHHS: job knowledge, willingness to help others, responsiveness, being respectful of others, and effective communication.

Strategy 3.1b: Consumers are involved in the planning and execution of their rehabilitation program to the extent that they are willing and able to participate.

Strategy 3.1c: Consumers are consistently and accurately informed of their rights as consumers.

Strategy 3.1d: Increase training initiatives in the area of ethics.

Objective 3.2: Ensure statewide uniformity of case management and policy implementation.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 3 Objective 3.2:

Strategy 3.2a: Develop a quality assurance plan reflective of the recent centralization of quality development activities.

PRIORITY 4 GOAL 4: Resources: Sustain efforts necessary to retain, train and recruit qualified staff and provide or develop resources necessary to carry out the Division's goals, priorities, and services for individuals with disabilities and our business customers statewide.

Objective 4.1: Continue to recruit qualified staff with skills critical to the delivery of all service components of the Division.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 4 Objective 4.1:

Strategy 4.1a: Increase targeted recruiting efforts in areas of identified staffing needs.

Substrategy 4.1a1: Increase targeted recruiting efforts as required to maintain deaf counselor staffing needs to effectively serve individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing statewide.

Substrategy 4.1a2: Increase recruiting and other efforts to increase the availability of qualified vocational evaluators necessary to serve the Division's consumers statewide.

Substrategy 4.1a3: Reallocate a position to allow small business consultant to continue the consultation to Rehabilitation Counselors.

Substrategy 4.1a4: Further explore and develop a plan to re-institute a physical disabilities specialist position, should the funding environment allow, or explore other options of providing staff the desired level of guidance and analysis in areas of new and developing methods of providing consumers effective and fiscally responsible physical restoration services.

Strategy 4.1b: Effectively utilize information obtained from the system for tracking applicants who decline employment with the Division as to reason.

Objective 4.2: Provide ongoing training to staff in order to maintain a high level of service effectiveness.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 4 Objective 4.2:

Strategy 4.2a: Develop and maintain a more systematic professional development system for new and experienced staff featuring areas of focus as identified through collected evidence.

Substrategy 4.2a1: Continue to develop and regularly offer training to staff on how to more effectively serve specific disability populations.

Substrategy 4.2a2: Offer online training options to staff that are available on-demand.

Substrategy 4.2a3: Routinely conduct gap analyses of the skill sets of recent graduate hires, to determine what additional skills are needed to increase effectiveness.

Substrategy 4.2a4: Continue to offer caseload management training.

Substrategy 4.2a5: Offer continuous support and training to Division management.

Substrategy 4.2a6: Conduct the training needs assessment on a biennial basis in order to maintain the most current information on staff development needs.

Objective 4.3: Increase the retention of highly skilled staff throughout the Division.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 4 Objective 4.3:

Strategy 4.3a: Explore alternative work arrangements/options that offer more flexibility to staff in their ability to serve consumers safely and effectively. Strategy 4.3b: Develop an action plan to accommodate the large number of anticipated staff retirements within the Division.

Objective 4.4: Identify and develop resources that are critical to the delivery of all service components of the Division.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 4 Objective 4.4:

Strategy 4.4a: Effectively coordinate and leverage existing resources.

Substrategy 4.4a1: Continue to utilize staff in a flexible manner that meets local office needs while exploring new staffing patterns that effectively meet business requirements.

Substrategy 4.4a2: Review and update staff job descriptions.

Strategy 4.4b: Expand resources through partnering with entities that can positively impact the quality and effectiveness of services.

Strategy 4.4c: Pursue additional funding as needed through grant opportunities that align with the Division's established goals and priorities.

Strategy 4.4d: Conduct a critical analysis of the Division's leased office spaces to determine if they effectively meet the needs of both staff and consumers.

PRIORITY 5 GOAL 5: Service Equity: Promote equity in the service delivery and the quality of job outcomes for our consumers.

Objective 5.1: Increase outreach to unserved and underserved populations of individuals with disabilities within the state as identified through the Triennial Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 5 Objective 5.1:

Strategy 5.1a: Based on the results of the most recently completed Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, the Division will focus on the following identified unserved and underserved populations of people with disabilities: women, older workers, those living in rural areas, individuals with physical disabilities, Native American Indians, and individuals with mental illness.

Strategy 5.1b: The Division will strategically provide information about its services within the working and residential communities with the largest concentrations of unserved and underserved populations within the state.

Strategy 5.1c: Division will work to establish a collaborative working relationship with culturally-oriented groups, including any economic organizations or chambers of commerce to increase successful employment of minorities and other unserved and underserved populations within North Carolina.

Strategy 5.1d: Better meet the communication needs of consumers with Limited English Proficiency.

Objective 5.2: Ensure that all vocational rehabilitation services are available and the decision of the appropriateness of each service for a consumer is made without regard to race, gender, disability type, age or geographic location of the consumer.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 5 Objective 5.2:

Strategy 5.2a: Increase efforts to ensure that information about all vocational rehabilitation services are made available to every consumer so that they may be an active participant in the development of their plan for services.

Strategy 5.2b: Continually improve in the uniformity of policy implementation throughout the state.

Objective 5.3: Continuously improve services to unserved and underserved populations of individuals with disabilities within the state as identified through the Triennial Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 5 Objective 5.3:

Strategy 5.3a: Based on the results of the most recently completed Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment, the Division will focus on the following identified unserved and underserved populations of people with disabilities: women, older workers, those living in rural areas, individuals with physical disabilities, Native American Indians, and individuals with mental illness.

Strategy 5.3b: Provide training for counselors regarding effective practices in serving individuals identified as unserved or underserved.

Strategy 5.3c: Increase the Division's collaboration with organizations and agencies that serve and advocate for the identified unserved or underserved populations.

Substrategy 5.3c1: Establish a pilot program using peers as a means of providing support to consumers in areas where regular supports are required to increase successful employment outcomes.

Objective 5.4: Continuously improve the methods and processes by which the employment-related needs of individuals with disabilities within the state are comprehensively assessed.

Strategies and Substrategies in support of Goal 5 Objective 5.4:

Strategy 5.4a: Implement continuous data collection and analysis of variables that affect the successful provision of services for all disability groups. Strategy 5.4b: Plan and implement the Triennial Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment for 2013.

Attachment 4.11(e)(2) Evaluation and Reports of Progress

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Supported Employment (SE) Goals

Requirement 1. Clearly identify all VR program goals consistent with the goals described in the FY 2012 Attachment 4.11(c)(1), including an evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals were achieved.

- Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
- Provide a description of the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Division's Response: The following program goals and priorities of the Division were developed in collaboration with the State Rehabilitation Council, along with input gathered through the comprehensive statewide needs assessment process, public input, and internal organizational needs assessment and planning processes for purposes of effectively carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs. In addition, the priorities and goals established support improved performance on standards and indicators and improved compliance in casework issues identified in the Corrective Action Plan that has since been completed during FFY 2010.

Priority 1: GOAL 1: Employment Outcomes: Increase quantity and quality of employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities, particularly individuals with significant/most significant disabilities through a dual customer approach.

Objective 1.1: Develop and maintain quality relationships with businesses in a variety of industries across the state.

Objective 1.2: Provide consumers with the services necessary to increase their employment options.

Measures for Goal 1: NC DVRS will achieve or exceed the required federal standards for the following indicators:

1.1 The number of persons achieving employment outcomes will equal or exceed the previous year.

FFY	Outcomes
2010 (baseline)	5,961
2011	6,303
2012	6,758

Performance Assessment: During FFY 2012, the number of successful employment outcomes for the Division's consumers increased by 455 (7.2%) over that of the previous year and 797 (13.4%) over FFY 2010. Despite North Carolina's average annualized unemployment rate hovering around 9.5% during 2012 (US average was 8.1% and Scotland county NC 16.9%), the Division was able to find employment for more individuals largely on account of its successful partnerships with community rehabilitation programs and employers through the Dual Customer Approach initiative begun about 8 years prior. Closures achieved through partnering with CRPs to provide Supported Employment or Work Adjustment training accounted for 2585 or 38% of closures during FFY 2012. Other strategies employed to improve performance on this indicator are summarized in attachment 4.11(d). The Division

continues to utilize On the Job Training and Internship services, though wage subsidies are funded at a reduced amount compared to what was offered during the period where this was subsidized by ARRA funds.

- 1.2 The percentage of all individuals who have achieved an employment outcome after exiting the program having received services will equal or exceed 55.80%.

FFY	Percentage
2010 (baseline)	56.55%
2011	56.5%
2012	56.4%

Performance Assessment: The Division is pleased to have met this indicator again for FFY 2012, during which, continued awareness of this indicator enabled increased emphasis by management. Group orientation at the larger offices continues to help this indicator by better informing potential applicants of the program's emphasis and requirements prior to application. Potential applicants who were not interested in the program and requirements following the group orientation did not apply for services, which contributed to an increased success rate.

- 1.4 Of all individuals who exit the VR program in competitive, self-, or Business Enterprise Program employment with earnings equivalent to at least the minimum wage, the percent who are individuals with significant disabilities will equal or exceed 62.40.

FFY	Percentage
2010 (baseline)	77.18%
2011	77.1%
2012	79.2%

Performance Assessment: The Division continues to greatly exceed the RSA standard in this category due in part to excellent collaboration and outreach efforts with community rehabilitation programs, advocacy groups, and multiple referral sources.

- 1.5 The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the program in competitive employment as a ratio to the average hourly earnings for all employed North Carolinians will equal or exceed 0.52.

FFY	Ratio
2010 (baseline)	0.50
2011	0.48
2012	0.48

Performance Assessment: For the FFY 2012, the Division was not able to meet this RSA indicator, which continues to present a challenge to the Division, despite strategies to encourage additional education and training for increasing consumers' market value, meeting this indicator

continues to elude our best efforts to date. This year, the Division is participating in an Institute for Community Inclusion, Inc.-sponsored learning collaborative where a cohort of 9 state VR programs selects a challenge to focus on and share its results over the course of a year. The Division has chosen this specific area upon which to focus through an intense study of 2 offices within the Western region representing 2 different economies. Asheville, which has a larger economy due to its regional influence and Forest City, which has a small manufacturing-based economy are the two offices where customized strategic planning has been undertaken to identify the most promising strategies to increase consumer's wages that can possibly be translated to other similar economies across the state.

The Division attributes its current performance on this indicator primarily as a result of two main factors—the large number of consumers served who begin entry-level positions and the increasing number of individuals served through supported employment, where wages are traditionally lower. Despite, the undesirable effect on the Division's performance on this measure, the Division's commitment to supported employment and transitioning youth is expected to remain strong going forward.

1.6 Of the individuals who achieve competitive employment, the difference between the percent who reported their own income as the largest single source of economic support at closure compared to the percent at application. The difference must equal or exceed 53.0.

FFY	Ratio
2010 (baseline)	62.29
2011	63.8
2012	63.8

Performance Assessment: During FFY 2012, the Division had solid performance on this indicator, and anticipates continued performance in FFY 2013.

Measures for Goal 1 Objective 1.1: NC DVRS will equal or improve performance when compared to the baseline for the following measurable indicators:

- Measure: Number of active business relationships.

Baseline: FFY 2012: 1,089 business relationships were developed by the NC DVRS team of Business Relations Representatives and 683 remain active as of 4/2013.

Note: Reported results may be low due to vacancies. Average BRR increase in business contacts increased by 25-50%. About 3 BRR's experienced a 20% average decrease in bus. development.

- Measure: Services provided to those businesses.

Baseline: FFY 2012:

Breakdown of Business Services Provided FFY 2012:

Windmills- Sensitivity Training	79
Information about VR Services	839

HR Assistance	327
Provided Incentives (Fed Bonding, OJT/Internships, WOTC)	358
Served on a partnership committee (gov/community)	82
Coordinated a Business DEAM Event	120
Represented VR at a community/business function	722
<u>Business Relations Follow Up</u>	<u>1,214</u>
Total Services Provided	3,741

- Measure: Industries represented.

Baseline: FFY 2012:

#1 Retail

#2 Manufacturing

#3 Food

#4 Services

#5 Medical

#6 Hospitality

Others include: Call centers, Marketing, Warehouse, Govt., Temp agencies,
Non-profit orgs and Transportation

Performance Assessment: The Division's activities in this area are probably underreported, since these are still being manually tracked until a new system for electronically tracking this via a centralized database is implemented. These activities and ongoing relationship-building with employers is a primary factor in the Division's ability to sustain its level of successful outcomes. A new video targeted toward employers entitled "Part of Our Team," features testimonials from satisfied employers was also developed this year and will help during outreach events such as Disability Employment Awareness Month.

- Measure: Consumers hired and job types.

Baseline: Employment Statistics FFY 2012:

	Number of Employment Outcomes	Column Percent	Combined Total Weekly Earnings at Closure	Average Weekly Earnings at Closure	Average Weekly Hours Worked at Closure	Average Hourly Earnings at Closure
Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) At Closure (Individuals in Paid Employment)						
11 Management	108	1.60	\$44,280	\$410	33.5	\$11.97
13 Business and Financial Operations	31	0.46	\$13,877	\$448	31.7	\$13.41
15 Computer and Mathematical	48	0.71	\$24,170	\$504	33.4	\$14.80
17 Architecture and Engineering	19	0.28	\$11,137	\$586	38.1	\$15.25
19 Life, Physical, and Social Science	12	0.18	\$7,640	\$637	36.7	\$17.04
21 Community and Social Services	91	1.35	\$34,583	\$380	29.5	\$12.51
23 Legal	6	0.09	\$3,785	\$631	39.5	\$15.92
25 Education, Training, and Library	128	1.90	\$44,496	\$348	27.2	\$12.55
27 Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	58	0.86	\$18,778	\$324	25.5	\$13.59
29 Healthcare Practitioners and Technical	96	1.43	\$45,099	\$470	32.1	\$14.55

- Measure: Consumers hired and job types.

Baseline: Employment Statistics FFY 2012:

	Number of Employment Outcomes	Column Percent	Combined Total Weekly Earnings at Closure	Average Weekly Earnings at Closure	Average Weekly Hours Worked at Closure	Average Hourly Earnings at Closure
31 Healthcare Support	355	5.27	\$102,538	\$289	29.4	\$9.80
33 Protective Service	35	0.52	\$11,778	\$337	31.2	\$10.57
35 Food Preparation and Serving Related	1,127	16.74	\$228,738	\$203	24.8	\$8.05
37 Building/Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance	785	11.66	\$168,345	\$214	24.6	\$8.69
39 Personal Care and Service	395	5.87	\$96,488	\$244	26.8	\$9.04
41 Sales and Related	571	8.48	\$134,323	\$235	27.0	\$8.48
43 Office and Administrative Support	773	11.48	\$217,050	\$281	28.7	\$9.42
45 Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	38	0.56	\$10,797	\$284	29.7	\$9.46
47 Construction and Extraction	246	3.65	\$96,225	\$391	34.4	\$11.45
49 Installation, Maintenance, and Repair	212	3.15	\$80,781	\$381	33.3	\$11.07
51 Production	862	12.80	\$281,791	\$327	34.4	\$9.38
53 Transportation and Material Moving	733	10.89	\$218,939	\$299	30.6	\$9.43
55 Military Specific	4	0.06	\$2,000	\$500	40.0	\$12.50
<i>Total</i>	6,733	100.00	\$1,897,638	\$282	28.9	\$9.50

Performance Assessment: As a baseline measure, the chart above indicates a good representative sampling of occupational classifications among closures, which is indicative that the Division is truly partnering with the consumer to help them realize the consumer's vocational goal whenever possible.

Measures for Goal 1 Objective 1.2: NC DVRS will equal or improve performance when compared to the baseline for the following measurable indicators:

- Measure: Consumers responding “a lot” to Consumer Satisfaction Survey question 2(c): “Did VR help you search for a job?”

FFY	Percentage
2010 (baseline)	41.45%
2011	41.09%
2012	42.75%

Performance Assessment: During 2012, there was a noticeable increase in the percentage of consumers surveyed responding that VR helped them search for a job, which indicates progress in this area through management's emphasis on partnering with consumers in every way possible to assist them toward their employment goals.

- Measure: Consumers responding “a lot” to Consumer Satisfaction Survey question 2(d): “Did VR help you decide on job choices?”

FFY	Percentage
2010 (baseline)	32.82%
2011	32.82%
2012	34.86%

Performance Assessment: During 2012, there was a substantial increase in the percentage of consumers surveyed responding that VR helped them decide on job choices, which indicates progress in this area through management's emphasis on partnering with consumers in every way possible to assist them toward their employment goals.

Priority 2: GOAL 2: Access to Services: Increase consumers' understanding of and access to the Division's services and programs including their ability to provide feedback.

Objective 2.1: Increase the availability of information about the VR program within the community.

Objective 2.2: Increase access to program services for potential consumers.

Objective 2.3: Increase access to feedback tools for potential, current and former consumers of services.

Measures for Goal 2: NC DVRS will equal or improve performance when compared to the baseline for the following measurable indicators:

- Measure: Ratio of individuals who develop a new Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) to applicants for services.

FFY	Applicants	New IPE	Ratio
2010 (baseline)	25,202	13,948	55.34%
2011	24,415	13,695	56.09%
2012	24,267	13,600	56.04%

Performance Assessment: A higher ratio in this indicator is indicative that the Division is accurately conveying the message to potential applicants that purpose of the Division's services is to effectively partner together to determine an employment goal and then work toward that end. The Division's performance on this measure appears to be steady.

- Measure: Consumer feedback response rates: Mailed consumer satisfaction survey response rate (adjusted for undeliverable):

FFY	RESPONSE
2010 (baseline)	15.0%
2011	13.0%
2012	17.8%

Performance Assessment: The Division and the State Rehabilitation Council have been working together for several years toward increasing the response rate by making the survey methods more accessible and easy to use. The Division has made specific efforts to reach consumers by mail, web, e-mail and phone (for a limited number of non-respondents). The increase in the response rate will continue to be monitored, but is expected to plateau once all survey methods are optimized for ease of access.

- Measure: Public Input forums held & total attendance.

FFY	FORUMS HELD	TOTAL ATTENDANCE
2011	7	93
2012	7	173

Performance Assessment: The Division and SRC continue to use multiple methods to invite stakeholders to the multiple public input sessions it holds every year. Further, it rotates communities and conducts at least two sessions per region per year. Individuals are invited via press release, website notifications, notifications to stakeholder groups, mail outs to consumers within easy driving distance of the input sessions, and through the use of consumer e-mail addresses. Social media would be the next medium to use to increase knowledge of feedback events and methods.

- Measure: Individuals providing input through web-based input options. Baseline: to be established FFY 2011

FFY	INDIVIDUALS
2011 (baseline)	20
2012	26

Note: This does not include web-based inquiries received at the local offices largely for purposes of contacting counselors and managers, which greatly exceed those directed centrally.

Performance Assessment: The Division offers several methods of accessing Division staff and leadership, including the SRC chair through web mail links and several individuals utilize this option whenever they prefer to submit their input via this method instead of through oral comments at a public input session. The Division expects a steady increase in the number of individuals using this method of access in the upcoming years and has plans to expand access via social media within FFY 2013.

- Measure: Number of cases served by the Client Assistance Program regarding the NC DVRS VR program:

FFY	CASES	CONTACTS
-----	-------	----------

2010 (baseline)	135	1410
2011	131	1611
2012	138	1778

Performance Assessment: The stable or increasing trend in contacts to the Client Assistance Program indicates that there is increasing awareness of this service and its ease of access. Consumers are notified of the Client Assistance Program at multiple points throughout the rehabilitation process. The program also participates in outreach and the service is mentioned at all public input sessions/forums for increased awareness.

Measures for Goal 2 Objective 2.1: NC DVRS will equal or improve performance when compared to the baseline for the following measurable indicators:

- Public Website traffic. Baseline: To be established FFY 2012

No measures feasibly obtained; however, with the upcoming addition of an official agency Facebook, additional web traffic should be generated and targeted information will receive better distribution and market penetration.

- Number of presentations to various stakeholder groups. Baseline: To be established FFY 2012

No measure feasibly obtained, with the exception of the interactions with employers as indicated under Goal 1 above.

Measures for Goal 2 Objective 2.2:

- Measure: Number of applicants with no previous closure in past 36 months compared with number of applicants with 1 or more previous closures within the past 36 months.

FFY	Number with NO previous closure in past 36 mo.	Percent	Number with 1 or more previous closures in past 36 mo.	Percent
2010 (baseline)	25,202	80.95%	5,930	19.05%
2011	19,058	80.99%	4,472	19.01%
2012	19,704	80.96%	4,634	19.04%

Performance Assessment: This indicator shows a healthy pattern in that a large majority of the individuals receiving services are not recycling through within a 36 month cycle, while approximately 1 out of 5 individuals has returned for services and feels comfortable doing so whenever the previous outcome does not last as long as expected.

- Measure: Applicants per referral source category other than self-referred.

<i>REFERRAL SOURCE</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2012</i>
70 Self-Referred Persons	9,193	9,237	10,351
10 College or University	212	170	143

12 Vocational School	12	19	14
14 Elementary or High School	4,134	3,711	3,660
16 School For Handicapped	12	12	11
19 Other Educational Institution	62	52	78
20 Mental Hospital	30	31	24
22 Special Hospital or Sanatorium	15	15	6
24 General Hospital	143	111	84
29 Other Hospital or Clinic	391	393	366
30 Rehabilitation Facility	249	261	266
32 Community Mental Health Center	1,007	933	926
34 State Crippled Child Agency	1	.	.
38 Other Public Health Agency	597	626	671
39 Other Private Health Org	864	890	838
40 Public Welfare Agency	164	178	169
42 Work First	159	147	81
43 Welfare-To-Work	13	7	3
44 Private Welfare Agency	5	11	8
50 SSDI Determination Unit	95	104	77
51 Social Security District Office	152	157	133
52 Workers Comp Agency	9	6	9
53 State Employment Svc	118	155	152
54 Selective Svc System	10	21	20
55 State Voc Rehab Agency	111	121	81
57 SSA/DDS	98	136	81
58 Joblink Center	293	283	233
59 Other Public Org/Agency	765	733	741
60 Artificial Appliance Company	9	3	5
62 Employer	36	35	37
65 Homeless Shelter/Institution	179	187	150
69 Other Private Org/Agency	1,337	1,183	950
72 Physician, Private	845	797	798
79 Other Individual, Private	2,139	2,170	1,853
80 State Adult Correct Agency	90	68	53
81 State Juvenile Correct Agency	112	104	72
82 State Parole Agency	14	23	19
83 State Probation Agency	126	141	107
84 Federal Parole/Probation	60	61	57
85 Courts	48	58	56
86 Other Courts	45	40	31
87 Federal Corrections Facility	16	26	13
88 State Adult Corrections Agency/MH	6	11	6
89 Community Based Reporting Center	993	766	624
90 Division of Prisons	233	222	210
Total (including self -referred persons)	25,202	24,415	24,267

Performance Assessment: The data above shows a steady decline in applicants for services in nearly every referral category; however the outcome success rate has held steady over the same time period, while successful outcome output has increased 13.4% over 2010. Effective outreach and education to appropriate referral sources will continue to be a necessary strategy for the Division to effectively achieve its mission.

Measures for Goal 2 Objective 2.3:

- Measure: Number of feedback channels available to consumers FFY 2010: 1) mail-based consumer satisfaction survey; 2) web-based e-mail links for feedback; 3) SRC-VR jointly conducted input sessions; 4) public input sessions for the state plan 5) Client Assistance Program

FFY 2011, 2012: Same feedback channels available as above

Performance Assessment: The Division is pleased to be able to continue to offer these feedback channels and is planning to add an additional means through its official agency Facebook page expected to go live FFY 2013.

Priority 3: GOAL 3: Service Quality and Uniformity: NC DVRS shall improve the quality and uniformity of the services it provides. Objective 3.1: Maintain a customer focus in the planning and provision of services.

Objective 3.2: Ensure statewide uniformity of case management and policy implementation.

Measures for Goal 3: NC DVRS will equal or improve performance when compared to the baseline for the following measurable indicators:

- Measure: Percentage of consumers responding "excellent" or "above average" on Consumer Satisfaction Survey Q9: "Overall, how would you rate your experience with NC Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) program?"

FFY	RESPONSE
2010 (baseline)	67.67%
2011	68.27%
2012	68.11%

Performance Assessment: During FFY 2011 and 12, the Division essentially maintained a 68% overall satisfaction rating of above average or excellent. This is a strong performance, but something the Division will aspire to exceed in the upcoming years.

- Measure: Percentage of consumers responding "excellent" or "above average" on Consumer Satisfaction Survey Q3: "How would you rate the response time of services provided by VR staff?" Baseline: FFY 2010: 63.97%

FFY	RESPONSE
2010 (baseline)	63.97%
2011	65.19%

2012	65.74%
------	--------

Performance Assessment: From 2010 the division increased this service response time measure by nearly 2 percentage points, which is a strong performance to build upon. Possibly, management focus on customer service and increased use of e-mail by consumers and staff may contribute to this increase in responsiveness. A decline in the vacancy rate for key counseling positions may have also contributed to the increase in satisfaction rates for this measure.

Measures for Goal 3 Objective 3.1:

• Measure: Percentage of consumers responding "Yes" to Consumer Satisfaction Survey Q4: "Did your counselor inform you that if you had a concern about services that you could contact the Client Assistance Program (CAP)?" Baseline: FFY 2010: 49.69% (33.05% did not recall)

FFY	Responded "Yes"	Responded "I do not recall"
2010 (baseline)	49.69%	33.05%
2011	53.06%	30.58%
2012	56.90%	24.49%

Performance Assessment: The Division's increased performance in this measure indicates that increased efforts to inform the consumer about the Client Assistance Program through including this information at multiple points in the rehabilitation plan and through counselor-consumer discussion has made a significant improvement in the number of individuals aware of the Client Assistance Program.

• Measure: Percentage of consumers responding "Yes" on Consumer Satisfaction Survey Q5: "Did your counselor inform you about your right to appeal agency decisions with which you disagree?" Baseline: FFY 2010: 57.54% (24.04% did not recall)

FFY	Responded "Yes"	Responded "I do not recall"
2010 (baseline)	57.54%	24.04%
2011	59.91%	24.07%
2012	62.07%	19.79%

Performance Assessment: The Division's increased performance in this measure indicates that increased efforts to inform consumers about their right to appeal agency decisions have been effective. Including this information at multiple points in the rehabilitation plan and through counselor-consumer discussion has made a significant improvement in the number of individuals aware of their rights.

• Measure: Percentage of consumers indicating that they were "satisfied" or "very satisfied" on Consumer Satisfaction Survey Q7: "How satisfied were you with your level of involvement in your rehabilitation program (for example deciding on job goals, selecting available services, choosing providers, etc.)?"

FFY	RESPONSE
-----	----------

2010 (baseline)	80.55%
2011	81.13%
2012	81.71%

Performance Assessment: The Division's performance in this area is strong and continues to improve with an expected plateau at some point. The performance is attributable to unwavering management reinforcement of forming a partnership with the consumer to the greatest extent possible.

- Measure: Service Timeliness Measures: referral response; eligibility determination; IPE development; major service initiation

- Measure: Number of Days from Referral Date to Actual Application Date by FFY of Actual Application Date

FFY of Application	Median (days)	Mean (days)	Upper Quartile (days)	Total Number of Applications
2010 (baseline)	10.0	17.8	22.0	25170
2011	11.0	18.4	23.0	24417
2012	11.0	18.3	22.0	24217

*Valid range for case inclusion in the analysis was 0 to 364 days to control for erroneous data entry.

Performance Assessment: Considering the volume and the median and mean results indicated above, the process rate is well within acceptable limits; therefore the Division as a whole is doing well in the processing of referrals.

- Measure: Number of Days from Actual Application Date to Eligibility Determination by FFY of Status 10 Effective Date or Activation Date*

FFY of Eligibility Determination	Median (days)	Mean (days)	Upper Quartile (days)	Total Number of cases
2010 (baseline)	35.0	42.4	56.0	20539
2011	34.0	41.9	56.0	19917
2012	33.0	41.5	55.0	19835

*If the consumer was determined eligible in status-12 then activation date was used.

Performance Assessment: Considering the standard of 60 days for determining eligibility, the Division on a whole has performed very well based on the above data and actually decreased both the median and mean measure by 1-2 days overall since 2010. The Division, in general, will continue to work toward minimizing this delay and with the increased use of electronic systems for the transfer of diagnostic and supporting documentation used for eligibility determinations, this should help with efficiency.

- Measure : Number of Days from Eligibility Determination to IPE by FFY of Activation Date

FFY of IPE	Median (days)	Mean (days)	Upper Quartile (days)	Total Number
2010 (baseline)	28.0	61.9	84.0	14234
2011	32.0	63.9	90.0	13677
2012	31.0	65.2	89.0	13596

Performance Assessment: The results of the data observed above can be interpreted in more than one way. In support of informed choice, partnering closely with consumers or their representatives does often involve scheduling delays and there is a balance to be achieved. The Division was, on a whole, slower to establish IPEs by a few days and this measure will continue to be monitored.

•Measure : Number of Days from Activation to Major Service (non-diagnostic/non-assessment) by FFY of Activation Date

FFY of Activation	Median (days)	Mean (days)	(N) Total number of Cases
2010 (baseline)	28.0	97.3	7,700
2011	28.0	104.4	8,383
2012	29.0	105.8	9,246

Note: For well over half of the cases in the data sets, the first non-diagnostic/non-assessment service provided subsequent to IPE development were provided within a month (i.e., 28 days) of the status-12 effective date.

Performance Assessment: The data indicates a slight increase in time since the baseline year, but remains a fairly stable measure. It is predicted that FFY 2013 data would remain consistent with this pattern; however, for FFY 2014, the impact of the new BEAM electronic case management system could cause an increase in time initially, followed by years where optimization occurs once users are familiar with the processes and all secondary support systems such as vendor setup are well established and optimized.

• Casework quality measures as tracked through Quality Development Specialist case reviews

Measures for Goal 3 Objective 3.2:

• Quality and uniformity measures as tracked through Quality Development Specialist case reviews using FFY 2010 as baseline data

Item		FFY					
		2010		2011		2012	
1	QDS Index Score (unweighted sum scores from below items)						
		Count	Column%	Count	Column%	Count	Column%
	No	552	4.57%	674	5.05%	566	4.14%
	Yes	11,519	95.43%	12,681	94.95%	13,109	95.86%
		12,071	100.00%	13,355	100.00%	13,675	100.00%

				FFY			
		2010		2011		2012	
2	Medical-Specialist Data supports existence of impairments?	Count	Column%	Count	Column%	Count	Column%
	No	21	1.87%	21	1.71%	25	1.98%
	Yes	1,100	98.13%	1,206	98.29%	1,235	98.02%
		1,121	100.00%	1,227	100.00%	1,260	100.00%
				FFY			
		2010		2011		2012	
3	Data supports impediments to employment?	Count	Column%	Count	Column%	Count	Column%
	No	20	1.80%	21	1.72%	19	1.52%
	Yes	1,094	98.20%	1,197	98.28%	1,233	98.48%
		1,114	100.00%	1,218	100.00%	1,252	100.00%
				FFY			
		2010		2011		2012	
4	Data supports: Requires VR services?	Count	Column%	Count	Column%	Count	Column%
	No	12	1.08%	14	1.15%	17	1.36%
	Yes	1,101	98.92%	1,201	98.85%	1,233	98.64%
		1,113	100.00%	1,215	100.00%	1,250	100.00%
				FFY			
		2010		2011		2012	
5	SSI/SSDI benefits verified for presumptive eligibility?	Count	Column%	Count	Column%	Count	Column%
	No	9	3.06%	6	1.91%	15	4.37%
	Yes	285	96.94%	308	98.09%	328	95.63%
		294	100.00%	314	100.00%	343	100.00%
				FFY			
		2010		2011		2012	
6	Data Supports SD Decision Appropriate?	Count	Column%	Count	Column%	Count	Column%
	No	76	6.51%	88	6.93%	75	5.75%
	Yes	1,092	93.49%	1,182	93.07%	1,230	94.25%
		1,168	100.00%	1,270	100.00%	1,305	100.00%
				FFY			
		2010		2011		2012	
7	Analysis of comp assessment sufficiently documented?	Count	Column%	Count	Column%	Count	Column%

	No	110	9.75%	140	11.27%	111	8.71%
	Yes	1,018	90.25%	1,102	88.73%	1,164	91.29%
		1,128	100.00%	1,242	100.00%	1,275	100.00%
				FFY			
		2010		2011		2012	
8	Financial Need is appropriately established?	Count	Column%	Count	Column%	Count	Column%
	No	90	9.89%	102	10.24%	112	10.75%
	Yes	820	90.11%	894	89.76%	930	89.25%
		910	100.00%	996	100.00%	1,042	100.00%
				FFY			
		2010		2011		2012	
9	Comparable benefits used appropriately?	Count	Column%	Count	Column%	Count	Column%
	No	13	2.13%	24	2.99%	17	2.23%
	Yes	596	97.87%	779	97.01%	747	97.77%
		609	100.00%	803	100.00%	764	100.00%
				FFY			
		2010		2011		2012	
10	Service needs reflected from comprehensive assessment?	Count	Column%	Count	Column%	Count	Column%
	No	87	7.60%	57	4.59%	49	3.84%
	Yes	1,057	92.40%	1,186	95.41%	1,228	96.16%
		1,144	100.00%	1,243	100.00%	1,277	100.00%
				FFY			
		2010		2011		2012	
11	All major services initiated within time frames noted?	Count	Column%	Count	Column%	Count	Column%
	No	43	3.89%	110	9.16%	66	5.34%
	Yes	1,061	96.11%	1,091	90.84%	1,170	94.66%
		1,104	100.00%	1,201	100.00%	1,236	100.00%
				FFY			
		2010		2011		2012	
12	Planned services have been provided toward achieving job choice	Count	Column%	Count	Column%	Count	Column%
	No	53	5.17%	70	6.22%	46	3.98%
	Yes	972	94.83%	1,056	93.78%	1,110	96.02%
		1,025	100.00%	1,126	100.00%	1,156	100.00%
				FFY			

		2010		2011		2012	
13	Services planned in an integrated setting?	Count	Column%	Count	Column%	Count	Column%
	No	12	1.05%	7	0.56%	3	0.24%
	Yes	1,126	98.95%	1,236	99.44%	1,268	99.76%
		1,138	100.00%	1,243	100.00%	1,271	100.00%
				FFY			
		2010		2011		2012	
14	Documentation of substantial services and prof interventions?	Count	Column%	Count	Column%	Count	Column%
	No	6	2.96%	14	5.45%	11	5.56%
	Yes	197	97.04%	243	94.55%	187	94.44%
		203	100.00%	257	100.00%	198	100.00%

Performance Assessment: Centrally managed Quality Development Specialists review a sampling of cases from all caseloads annually. They are instrumental in training new counselors in case service policy interpretations, casework documentation standards, compliance requirements and overall case service quality. The table immediately above highlights some of the case review points of interest comparing results between FFY 2010-12. Item 1 above, which is an unweighted index score of the items below it, indicates that overall, over 95% of items reviewed met the accepted standards. One must keep in mind that new counselors are routinely coming into the profession and receiving valuable feedback on their casework, so it is expected that a small percentage of items to be addressed will be identified especially among that class of counselors. Of positive note is that this overall indexed summary is fairly consistent over the observed period, indicating that the Division's emphasis on the importance of these review components remains consistent and that instructional and coaching efforts have been successfully sustained. Items 2,3,4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 indicate consistently strong or improved compliance over the observed time period; whereas, item 5 has decreased during FFY 2012 and will need to be monitored and emphasized. An ongoing area where the Division has consistently emphasized is the quality of documentation of analysis of the comprehensive assessment and according to the data, this may still be creating challenges for staff that are generally time strapped with large caseload sizes.

- Measure: Case service expenditure data by region.

FFY	Western	Central	Eastern
2010 (baseline)	\$19,081,960	\$18,432,988	\$12,889,762
2011	\$19,040,484 (\$1,987/case)	\$17,860,389 (\$1,352/case)	\$12,455,780 (\$1,620/case)
2012	\$21,281,845 (\$2,017/case)	\$22,447,688 (\$1,539/case)	\$15,692,426 (\$1,845/case)

Performance Assessment: Based on the expenditure patterns presented above, there is reasonable uniformity in expenditure per case across the state. The management structure and central policy interpretation contributed toward maintaining this relatively uniform pattern.

- Measure: Average case length data by consumer satisfaction survey respondent group using FFY 2010 baseline data

Satisfaction Survey Q9. Overall how would you rate your experience with the NC VR Program?

Rating	FFY 2010			FFY 2011			FFY 2012		
	N	Col.%	Avg Days IPE-Closure	N	Col.%	Avg Days IPE-Closure	N	Col.%	Avg Days IPE-Closure
5. Excellent	635	49.1%	587	591	50.7%	614	839	47.2%	626
4. Above average	240	18.6%	684	205	17.6%	715	372	20.9%	727
3. Average	226	17.5%	815	215	18.4%	815	318	17.9%	902
2. Below average	96	7.4%	975	77	6.6%	898	110	6.2%	1,048
1. Poor	96	7.4%	852	78	6.7%	909	139	7.8%	1,047
Total	1,293	100.0%	693	1,166	100.0%	707	1,778	100.0%	755

Note: This table includes both successful closures and unsuccessful case closures.

Performance Assessment: The Division observes this trend of increased average days from IPE development to closure among respondents with an increase in some situations extending much longer, resulting in a “below average” or “poor” rating and will continue to monitor this trend.

Priority 4: GOAL 4: Resources: Sustain efforts necessary to retain, train and recruit qualified staff and provide or develop resources necessary to carry out the Division’s goals, priorities, and services for individuals with disabilities and our business customers statewide.

Objective 4.1: Continue to recruit qualified staff with skills critical to the delivery of all service components of the Division.

Objective 4.2: Provide ongoing training to staff in order to maintain a high level of service effectiveness.

Objective 4.3: Increase the retention of highly skilled staff throughout the Division.

Objective 4.4: Identify and develop resources that are critical to the delivery of all service components of the Division.

Measures for Goal 4:

- Measure: Division’s turnover rate and vacancy count. Baseline: to be established FFY 2011 (see below)
- Measure: Average Division-funded, coordinated, or administered training hours offered per staff annually. Baseline: FFY 2012: 15.40 training hours based on 960 employees.

Performance Assessment: During FFY 2012, the Staff Development section has calculated that an average of 15.40 training hours per staff were provided. This is considered a baseline

measure and is subject to available resources from year to year. A description of the various training methods employed are summarized in attachment 4.10 Comprehensive System of Professional Development.

•Staff survey results pertaining to training and perceived availability of/access to resources needed to provide services effectively to consumers and business customers.

Performance assessment: During FFY 2012, Staff Development did not directly ask staff through a survey if they have the tools and resources they need to provide services. However, every 2 years a needs assessment is completed and tracked by position title to determine what needs have not been met. It is with that information that Staff Development plans staff training accordingly with the understanding that initiatives and other projects that may be implemented through the Department or through other means may interfere with the planned course of work. Following the delivery of training, a course evaluation is consistently administered allowing open comments and no indication has been given through this feedback during the 2012 FFY that staff do not have access to resources to effectively provide services to consumers and business customers.

Measures for Goal 4 Objective 4.1: • Turnover rate and number of vacancies during the last FFY.

All Voc Rehab and IL Employees					
FFY	Turnover Rate	Total Separations	Retirements	Retirement Rate	Number of Employees
2011	9.536%	150	45	2.861%	1,573
2012	8.138%	125	27	1.758%	1,536

Rehab Counselor I, Rehab Counselor II, Rehab Counselor In Charge					
FFY	Turnover Rate	Total Separations	Retirements	Retirement Rate	Number of Employees
2011	9.942%	34	6	1.754%	342
2012	10%	36	5	1.389%	360

Performance assessment: Overall for all VR and IL employees, there was a reduction in the turnover rate by 1.4% with 25 fewer separations and a reduced retirement rate, which is most probably the result of the relatively economic instability external to the Division which may be increasing the retention rate. However, there are specific strategies that are being used to increase the retention rate based on information obtained through exit interviews. One strategy is the emphasis on new employee orientation and peer-provided guidance such as made available through casework advisor positions. Unfortunately, the turnover rate and separations rate among critical rehab counseling staff has held steady. Management will monitor this rate and should it continue to increase, will seek ways to more heavily emphasize strategies for retention of these staff.

Measures for Goal 4 Objective 4.2: •Number of staff attending a training session in the last FFY broken down by position type.

Position Class	FFY 2012 (Baseline)
Managers/Supervisors Receiving Training	497
Professional/Knowledge Workers Receiving Training	1700
Team Members Receiving Training	781

*This data includes counts of staff who have left the Division during FFY 2012.

Performance assessment: During this baseline year of FFY 2012, the staff development section has utilized their resources efficiently through the scheduling of training sessions for office staff meetings, web-based training provided directly or contracted through the Division. Furthermore, additional excellent resources have been made available by resources such as training by TACE centers and other national agencies focusing on employment and disability issues.

Measures for Goal 4 Objective 4.4: •Total value of and number of different sources of third party funding or grants, beyond the basic support grants, applied toward the provision of vocational rehabilitation and related services. Baseline: To be established FFY 2012

FFY	Number of Third Party Sources	Total Amount
2012 (baseline)	38	\$2,578,721

Performance Assessment: This measure can possibly show the extent of the collaboration with partners such as school systems who strongly support the availability of a vocational rehabilitation counselor to the extent that these third party partners contribute toward the establishment of the position. In a challenging economy with tight budgets, the Division estimates it will be a challenge to maintain or increase this level of funding going forward, but this measure will help serve to monitor these arrangements.

Priority 5: GOAL 5: Service Equity: Promote equity in the service delivery and the quality of job outcomes for our consumers.

Objective 5.1: Increase outreach to unserved and underserved populations of individuals with disabilities within the state as identified through the Triennial Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

Objective 5.2: Ensure that all vocational rehabilitation services are available and the decision of the appropriateness of each service for a consumer is made without regard to race, gender, disability type, age or geographic location of the consumer.

Objective 5.3: Continuously improve services to unserved and underserved populations of individuals with disabilities within the state as identified through the Triennial Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment.

Objective 5.4: Continuously improve the methods and processes by which the employment-related needs of individuals with disabilities within the state are comprehensively assessed.

Measures for Goal 5: NC DVRS will equal or improve performance when compared to the baseline for the following measurable indicators:

- Measure: RSA Standard and Indicator 1.5 (wage ratio) for identified unserved and underserved populations identified in the statewide comprehensive needs assessment. Federal Standard is 52.0

Consumer Group	FFY 2010 (baseline)	FFY 2011	FFY 2012
Male	48.65	47.02	46.72
Female	47.55	45.79	45.53
Living in Urban-environment	48.08	46.32	46.30
Living in Large Rural env.	47.85	46.04	45.13
Living in Small Rural env.	47.44	46.79	45.25
Living in isolated environment	49.06	46.87	47.98
White	50.21	48.64	48.27
Black/African American	44.84	43.96	43.75
American Indian/Alaskan	49.94	47.58	45.93
Asian	53.10	46.63	50.08
Native Hawaiian	55.04	40.20	42.67
Hispanic/Latino	53.55	46.53	45.49
Major Disability	FFY 2010 (baseline)	FFY 2011	FFY 2012
Hearing or Vision	53.81	52.98	53.14
Orthopedic or Amputation	55.21	53.26	53.56
Other Physical	53.43	49.52	50.37
Cognitive MR/LD	42.53	42.00	41.28
Alcohol/Drug Dependent	47.21	46.15	45.37
Other Mental/Emotional	46.78	44.99	44.46
Traumatic Brain Injury	51.95	46.85	49.53

Performance Assessment: Unfortunately, for nearly every category represented in the table above, the performance on this indicator has fallen since FFY 2010 and no consumer group, parsed by race/ethnicity or residence classification has met the standard since FFY 2011, which greatly concerns the Division. The Division has begun to study the causes for this, and has elected this topic to be its primary area of study in collaboration with the Institute for Community Inclusion through a pilot study of two economies in the areas surrounding Asheville and Forest City. The Division is looking to learn from this study where various strategies are being employed to possibly increase the quality of employment outcomes for consumers, while realizing that it may take years for the Division to observe a significant impact on this indicator on a statewide basis.

Measure for Goal 5 Objective 5.1: Number of applications for Vocational Rehabilitation program services by group.

Consumer Group	FFY 2010 (baseline)	FFY 2011	FFY 2012

Male	14,445	13,644	13,364
Female	10,787	10,836	10,926
Living in Urban-environment	15,834	15,597	15,468
Living in Large Rural env.	5,597	5,347	5,244
Living in Small Rural env.	1,892	1,788	1,892
Living in isolated environment	1,537	1,420	1,399
White	12,515	11,972	11,860
Black/African American	11,388	11,408	11,282
American Indian/Alaskan	461	412	450
Asian	117	113	110
Native Hawaiian	23	27	24
Hispanic/Latino	728	548	564
Major Disability	FFY 2010 (baseline)	FFY 2011	FFY 2012
Hearing or Vision	873	839	836
Orthopedic or Amputation	3,561	3,416	3,369
Other Physical	1,954	1,834	1,865
Cognitive MR/LD	5,802	5,346	5,360
Alcohol/Drug Dependent	1,724	1,679	1,630
Other Mental/Emotional	6,378	6,564	6,601
Traumatic Brain Injury	309	332	293
N/A or unknown	4,631	4,470	4,336

Performance Assessment: The table above indicates that during the period FFY 10-12, applications were being received steadily by all classifications of consumers with no particular segment seeing a drastic increase or decrease year over year. The Division finds its performance in this area to be acceptable and will continue to monitor this measure and investigate any significant pattern of decrease over time.

Measure for Goal 5 Objective 5.2: Results of Question 7 from Consumer Satisfaction Survey for groups identified as unserved or underserved in the statewide comprehensive needs assessment: "**How satisfied are you with your level of involvement in your rehabilitation program?**"

Consumer Group	FFY 2010 (baseline)	FFY 2011	FFY 2012
	% Excellent or Above Average	% Excellent or Above Average	% Excellent or Above Average
Female	81.95%	80.76%	81.15%
Living in Rural Environment	85.07%	82.58%	83.68%
Minority	82.21%	81.45%	82.61%
American Indian/Alaskan	87.50%	91.30%	73.34%
55+ Years Old	84.62%	84.12%	83.97%
24 or less Years Old	77.10%	76.32%	79.28%
Major Disability	FFY 2010 (baseline)	FFY 2011	FFY 2012
Sensory/Communication	86.44%	90.63%	82.40%
Physical	82.36%	83.10%	83.05%

Cognitive	79.77%	81.44%	83.17%
Mental Illness	74.86%	76.70%	78.83%

Performance Assessment: The data table above indicates that among the consumer segments presented, the Division's consumers are aggregately satisfied or very satisfied with their involvement in their rehabilitation plan of services with a few items of note. Overall, it is interesting to note that consistently over the time period, there is a marked difference in the satisfaction rate in this measure comparing response rates of individuals 55 and older with those of individuals who are 24 years old or younger. This may indicate a bit of a generational difference between the expectations of each group regarding their anticipated level of involvement and may indicate a possible need for the Division's staff to learn how to better relate to and strive to meet the expectations youth may have in their rehabilitation program.

Also of note were the general increases among individuals with cognitive or mental illness and the decrease among consumers with sensory/communicative disabilities, the latter of which may be the result of the general caseload size of this particular group of consumers. As it stands currently, counselors who have signing capability for communicating with deaf individuals have larger coverage areas since it is difficult to maintain such staff. The significant decrease in the satisfaction rate among American Indian/Alaskan segment is largely attributed to the very small sample size from returned surveys from that group. All of the above trends will continue to be monitored.

Measure for Objective 5.3: Results of Question 9 from Consumer Satisfaction Survey for groups identified as unserved or underserved in the statewide comprehensive needs assessment: "**Overall, how would you rate your experience with the North Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR) program?**"

Consumer Group	FFY 2010 (baseline) % Excellent or Above Average	FFY 2011 % Excellent or Above Average	FFY 2012 % Excellent or Above Average
Female	68.64%	67.44%	66.67%
Living in Rural Environment	70.87%	74.36%	71.26%
Minority	68.94%	67.16%	69.12%
American Indian/Alaskan	81.25%	73.91%	56.66%
55+ Years Old	77.93%	73.29%	73.13%
24 or less Years Old	59.71%	58.24%	60.98%
Major Disability	FFY 2010 (baseline)	FFY 2011	FFY 2012
Sensory/Communication	76.80%	86.57%	74.11%
Physical	71.18%	74.39%	70.40%
Cognitive	61.40%	63.27%	64.32%
Mental Illness	64.26%	61.39%	67.01%

Performance Assessment: Aggregately, over 2 of every 3 individuals served by the Division rated their overall experience with the VR program to be excellent or above average, some segments notably higher. The Division's performance is very good overall, but needs to continue its effort to strive for increased satisfaction rates at these levels. Of notable increase over the time period measured is the satisfaction rating of minorities, those with mental illness, and cognitive disabilities; whereas, the responses of the

American Indian/Alaskan are of concern. However, it is to be noted that this segment had a particularly low response rate (n = 11).

Requirement:

2. Identify all supported employment program goals consistent with the goals described in Attachment 4.11(c)(4), including an evaluation of the extent to which the supported employment program goals were achieved.

- Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
- Provide a description of the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Response: Goals for the supported employment program for FFY 2012 included:

Supported Employment Goal 1: Increase the number of individuals with most significant disabilities who receive supported employment services.

FFY	Individuals Receiving Supported Employment Services
2008	4,206
2009	4,264
2010	4,385
2011	4,372
2012	4,305

Performance Assessment: The observed peak in the number of individuals receiving supported employment services through the Division peaked during FFY 2010 and 11, largely attributable to an increase in available funding through ARRA projects during that time period. The number of individuals receiving services during 2012 FFY is significantly higher than prior to the ARRA funding availability. Additional factors contributed toward the successful achievement of this general increase among them successful collaborative committee work of the CRP-DVR steering committee systematically addressing any problem areas in the provision of services; several regional collaborative trainings where best practices and foundational information was reinforced; excellent educational efforts and management by the six regional CRP-Specialists who routinely monitor activities, help develop new providers, and effectively liaise between the CRP programs within their coverage territories.

Supported Employment Goal 2: Identify and begin implementing practices that can increase the successful closure rate of individuals receiving supported employment services.

Performance Assessment: During FFY 2012, 1,023 individuals receiving supported employment had experienced successful employment outcomes compared with 1,031 individuals receiving the services, but closing unsuccessfully without achieving their successful employment outcome. This success rate was 49.8%, which is almost 1 percentage above the comparable success rate for FFY 2011 (49.0%), but

significantly lower than years prior (51% FFY 2010 and 58% FFY 2009). Unfortunately, this observed decline, which the Division is intent on reversing may partially be attributed to the instability of several SE service providers during this period. During this economic downturn, several programs were struggling to retain staff due to overarching financial concerns. Furthermore, our community rehabilitation program specialists indicate that this trend may also be attributed to their observation that today's employers are most interested in hiring workers who are able to multitask as compared with an individual dedicated toward one or two tasks. This therefore limits the placement opportunities for individuals receiving supported employment services. The longstanding shortage of funds dedicated to long term follow along for this population is another important factor. The new employment specialist with the NC MH/DD/SAS has been working diligently and strategically to do everything in their realm of influence to turn this around, despite the constant changing structuring of that Division's service delivery components.

During FFY 2012, the Division began a paradigm shift toward outcome-based milestone payment arrangements for CRP service providers who were providing services on an authorization basis. This will place an emphasis on measurable outcomes more than activity and activity reporting. The first milestone payment that was established and implemented was the job development component that was implemented Oct. 1, 2012. The Division is working closely with CRP representatives to determine the full milestone payment system from intake through successful employment outcome with a projected implementation date of October, 2013.

Supported Employment Goal 3: In search of improved supported employment services delivery models and practices, continue assessing the positive components gained through experience with the ARRA-funded innovative collaborative projects that concluded with FFY 2011.

Performance Assessment: During FFY 2012, the Division worked to establish two programs as an extension of programs that were funded under the ARRA contracts that the Division had established during FFY 10-11 to help meet the needs of consumers with significant and most significant disabilities in areas of employment training, employment-related transportation, and the creation of CRP-based enterprises for purposes of training. Two of the programs that were extended follow the "Project Search" nationally known model to provide training for transition-aged students in the Durham and Charlotte areas. These programs are described as business-led, one year school-to-work programs that takes place entirely at a workplace. The host sites for the expanded program selected through a collaborative planning process were Durham Regional Hospital in Durham, NC and Mercy Hospital in Charlotte, NC. The differentiation component of these programs is that it follows a concept that employs total workplace immersion which facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through worksite rotations. The two programs entered performance-based contracts July 1, 2012 and remain in place.

Supported Employment Goal 4: Support increased training/qualification requirements for job coaches and their supervisory staff. Collaboratively increase supported employment training to NC DVRS rehabilitation counselors and Community Rehabilitation Program direct service staff through the addition of a web-based (and other forms of) curriculum development.

Performance Assessment: The CRP-DVRS steering committee has established a subcommittee to focus on this area and are assessing the current training needs of CRP staff. The committee will continue to work with the regional TACE to implement components of the training effort addressing this area as resources allow. The Division's rules addressing these requirements are also in process.

Supported Employment Goal 5: Continue collaboration with the Division of Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services to secure reporting of the expenditures of the Long Term Support service definition in order to assure consistent administration of these funds.

Performance Assessment: The Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services' (DMHDDSA) employment specialist has been instrumental in bridging a communication gap that has existed in previous years. This individual has been very involved improving Local Management Entity/Managed Care Organization (LME/MCO) funding agreements to provide emphasis on effective utilization and accounting of extended services funding for recipients of supported employment services. The individual is also providing regular education to the service provider community. Also, DMHDDSA is developing a state definition for supported employment and long term vocational support. Through this definition, if an individual with disabilities chooses NC DVRS as their supported employment provider, and the person is served through the (LME/MCO) system, they will be able to receive long term vocational supports (LTVS).

Requirement:

3. Provide an Assessment of the performance of the VR program on the standards and indicators for FY 2011.

Division's Response:

During FFY 2012, NC DVRS met all RSA standards and indicators with the exception of indicator 1.5.

RSA 1.1 The number of persons achieving employment outcomes will equal or exceed the previous year.

FFY	Outcomes
2010 (baseline)	5,961
2011	6,303
2012	6,758

Performance Assessment: During FFY 2012, the number of successful employment outcomes for the Division's consumers increased by 455 (7.2%) over that of the previous year and 797 (13.4%) over FFY 2010. Despite North Carolina's average annualized unemployment rate hovering around 9.5% during 2012 (US average was 8.1% and Scotland county NC 16.9%), the Division was able to find employment for more individuals largely on account of its successful partnerships with community rehabilitation programs and employers through the Dual Customer Approach initiative begun about 8 years prior. Closures achieved through partnering with CRPs to provide Supported Employment or Work Adjustment training accounted for 2585 or 38% of closures during FFY 2012. Other strategies employed to improve performance on this indicator are summarized in attachment 4.11(d). The Division continues to utilize On the Job Training and Internship services, though wage subsidies are funded at a reduced amount compared to what was offered during the period where this was subsidized by ARRA funds.

RSA 1.2 The percentage of all individuals who have achieved an employment outcome after exiting the program having received services will equal or exceed 55.80%.

FFY	Percentage
2010 (baseline)	56.55%
2011	56.5%
2012	56.4%

Performance Assessment: The Division is pleased to have met this indicator again for FFY 2012, during which, continued awareness of this indicator enabled increased emphasis by management. Group orientation at the larger offices continues to help this indicator by better informing potential applicants of the program's emphasis and requirements prior to application. Potential applicants who were not interested in the program and requirements following the group orientation did not apply for services, which contributed to an increased success rate.

RSA 1.3 The percentage of individuals rehabilitated who achieve competitive employment earning at least minimum wage will equal or exceed 72.6%

FFY	Percentage
2010 (baseline)	100%
2011	100%
2012	100%

Performance Assessment: NC DVRS continues to have strong performance in this indicator, since competitive employment remains a successful closure standard within the Division's policy.

RSA 1.4 The percent of individuals who have significant disabilities among those who achieve competitive employment will be at least 62.4%.

FFY	Percentage
2010 (baseline)	77.18%
2011	77.02%
2012	79.2%

Performance Assessment: The Division continues to greatly exceed the RSA standard in this category due in part to excellent collaboration and outreach efforts with community rehabilitation programs, advocacy groups, and multiple referral sources.

RSA 1.5 The average hourly earnings of all individuals who exit the program in competitive employment as a ratio to the average hourly earnings for all employed North Carolinians will equal or exceed 0.52.

FFY	Ratio
2010 (baseline)	0.50
2011	0.48
2012	0.48

Performance Assessment: For the FFY 2012, the Division was not able to meet this RSA indicator, which continues to present a challenge to the Division, despite strategies to encourage additional education and training for increasing consumers' market value, meeting this indicator continues to elude our best efforts to date. This year, the Division is participating in an Institute for Community Inclusion, Inc.-sponsored learning collaborative where a cohort of 9 state VR programs selects a challenge to focus on and share its results over the course of a year. The Division has chosen

this specific area upon which to focus through an intense study of 2 offices within the Western region representing 2 different economies. Asheville, which has a larger economy due to its regional influence and Forest City, which has a small manufacturing-based economy are the two offices where customized strategic planning has been undertaken to identify the most promising strategies to increase consumer's wages that can possibly be translated to other similar economies across the state.

The Division attributes its current performance on this indicator primarily as a result of two main factors—the large number of consumers served who begin entry-level positions and the increasing number of individuals served through supported employment, where wages are traditionally lower. Despite, the undesirable effect on the Division's performance on this measure, the Division's commitment to supported employment and transitioning youth is expected to remain strong going forward.

RSA 1.6 Of the individuals who achieve competitive employment, the difference between the percent who reported their own income as the largest single source of economic support at closure compared to the percent at application. The difference must equal or exceed 53.0.

FFY	Ratio
2010 (baseline)	62.29
2011	63.8
2012	63.8

Performance Assessment: During FFY 2012, the Division had solid performance on this indicator, and anticipates continued performance in FFY 2013.

RSA 2.1 The service rate for all individuals with disabilities from minority backgrounds as a ratio of the service rate for all non-minority individuals with disabilities will equal or exceed 0.80.

FFY	Ratio
2010 (baseline)	0.97
2011	0.99
2012	0.95

Performance Assessment: NC DVRS continues to perform well on this indicator and expects to continue strong performance indefinitely, facilitated by outreach, a diversified service base, and continued efforts to collaborate with organizations representing diverse populations. Cultural awareness training efforts as part of the revised goals will also help maintain the Division's strong performance on this indicator going forward.

Requirement:

4. Provide a report on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized in FY 2012.

Division's Response:

During FFY 2012 NC DVRS reserved and used a portion of Title I funds to move forward with the strategies identified to achieve goals and priorities identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1). The areas where funds were utilized include:

- Strategic Needs and Assessment Planning (SNAP): The Division continues to increase the effectiveness of program service delivery and performance through ongoing work of the Strategic Needs and Assessment Planning (SNAP) initiative.
- Specialized Supported Employment Demonstration Project: In collaboration with NC Easterseals/UCP, a demonstration program that targets the provision of extensive wrap around support services for dually-diagnosed individuals with mental and mobility impairments that have not been successful with traditional supported employment programs was funded. During SFY 2012, the demonstration program reported that 11 individuals were successfully placed, reached stabilization or achieved a successful employment outcome.
- Support of Activities of the State Rehabilitation Council

During FFY 2012, the Division worked to establish two programs as an extension of programs that were funded under the ARRA contracts that the Division had established during FFY 10-11 to help meet the needs of consumers with significant and most significant disabilities in areas of employment training, employment-related transportation, and the creation of CRP-based enterprises for purposes of training. Two of the programs that were extended follow the “Project Search” nationally known model to provide training for transition-aged students in the Durham and Charlotte areas. These programs are described as business-led, one year school-to-work programs that are embedded within an actual workplace. The host sites for the expanded program selected through a collaborative planning process were Durham Regional Hospital in Durham, NC and Mercy Hospital in Charlotte, NC. The differentiation component of these programs is that it follows a concept that employs total workplace immersion which facilitates a seamless combination of classroom instruction, career exploration, and hands-on training through worksite rotations. The two programs entered performance-based contracts July 1, 2012 and remain in place.

Attachment 6.3 Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

- Describe quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Describe the timing of the transition to extended services

Division's Response:

The North Carolina Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services in cooperation with the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services, provided grant funding in 1985 to 6 service providers in North Carolina to implement supported employment services. In 1986 the Division was awarded funding from the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services to create a systems change approach to implementing supported employment services in North Carolina. Since 1987 the Division's effort has grown to a statewide system of approximately 118 supported employment programs. During FFY 2012, 4,305 individuals received supported employment services and 1,023 of these individuals achieved a successful employment outcome. Supported employment providers receive vendorship funding through the utilization of Title VI, Part B funds and General services fund (110). Title VI, Part B funds will continue to be utilized to supplement funds under Part B of Title I for the cost of supported employment services to persons with the most significant disabilities. However, the extent of services offered to a particular individual is determined on an individual basis incorporating the individual's informed choice pertaining to their need to achieve and to maintain a vocational goal. Examples of populations that will be served include (but are not limited to) individuals with severe and persistent mental illness, significant cognitive impairments, cerebral palsy, autism, and traumatic head injury. Supported employment services will be provided on a time-limited basis to individuals with the most significant disabilities. These services may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- development of and placement in jobs based on client informed choice in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, interests, concerns, abilities, and capabilities of individuals with the most significant disabilities;
- intensive on-site job skills training and other training provided by skilled job trainers, co-workers, and other qualified individuals, including fading and stabilization;
- extended follow along services, including regular contact with employers, trainees, parents, guardians, or other suitable professional and informed advisors, in order to reinforce and stabilize the job placement; and
- discrete post-employment services may be funded under Title I of the Act following the individual's transition to extended services if the required services are unavailable from the extended service providers and if they are necessary to maintain the job placement.

In addition to the individual and group models of supported employment, the transitional employment model will continue to be funded on a demonstration basis. These programs will provide transitional employment services to persons with severe and persistent mental illness and will serve as model sites for future transitional employment programs. Under federal regulations, the time-limited vocational rehabilitation supported employment services to be provided are not to exceed 18 months funding unless the individualized plan for employment indicates that more than 18 months of services is necessary in order for the individual to achieve job stability prior to transition to extended services. The transition process from vocational rehabilitation services to the extended service phase begins during the stabilization phase of supported employment. During this phase, the counselor documents the individual's adjustment to the job environment and job duties. Some indicators of stabilization include, but are not limited to, employer satisfaction, client satisfaction and minimal job coach intervention. The extended

services phase continues during the 90 days after the end of the stabilization phase. Interagency involvement begins from the point of referral for vocational rehabilitation services provided by the Division and continues until the stabilization phase is completed and the long-term support provider begins providing extended services.